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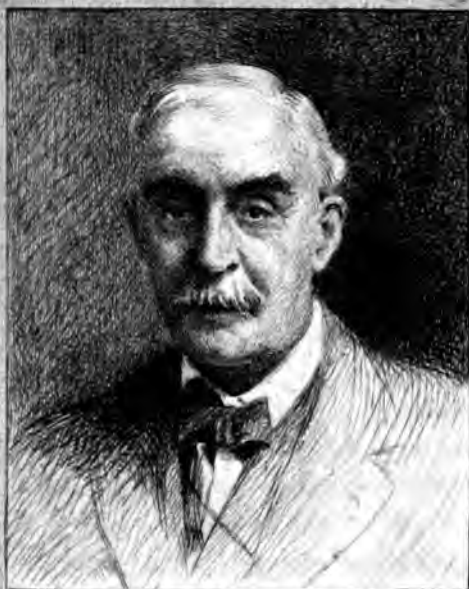
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# HISTORICAL BASIS OF MODERN EUROPE

ARCHIBALD WEIR, M.A.





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*Knicker*

THE HISTORICAL BASIS OF MODERN  
EUROPE (1760—1815).



THE HISTORICAL BASIS OF  
MODERN EUROPE  
(1760—1815).

*AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY TO THE GENERAL  
HISTORY OF EUROPE IN THE NINE-  
TEENTH CENTURY.*

BY  
ARCHIBALD WEIR, M.A.

"Oblivion is the dark page whereon Memory writes her light-beam characters."

CARLYLE.



LONDON:  
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—  
1886.

## ERRATUM.

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Page 175, line 4, for *Prussian Poland* read *East Prussia*.

## PREFACE.

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THE purpose of this work is to review in their logical connection the chief groups of events which form the groundwork of European history in the nineteenth century. Though historical in form, the book does not pretend to be a history, but aims only at presenting such a preliminary view of the immediate antecedents of modern civilisation as will supply a convenient, though of course arbitrary, basis for the study of our age. To effect this object, it has been necessary to abandon the usual artifice of bringing all history under the head of politics, and to distribute the subject in the following manner.

The introductory chapter endeavours to indicate as summarily as possible the evils of the monarchico-feudal system in the eighteenth century, and the ideas of reform which were generated by the contemporary intellectual movement. The second chapter reviews the work of the chief reforming monarchs, in order to exhibit the actual state of Europe in the latter part of the century, and to draw attention to the fact that monarchy by its good offices obtained over men's minds considerable

influence, which survived the Revolution and played a prominent part in subsequent political history. The same chapter, however, shows how monarchy failed to meet all the urgent wants of the times; and the next chapter gives an account of the causes which precipitated the Revolution. The fourth and fifth chapters follow the beaten track of the Napoleonic period for the sake of ranging in their places the most notable results of the revolutionary movement. Two more chapters consider the changes in Germany, Italy, Spain, Russia, Scandinavia, Turkey, Servia, and Greece, from which the modern history of these countries takes its departure. The eighth chapter describes the industrial revolution in England, which operated more than any other order of causes to change the conditions of political, social, and individual life throughout civilised communities; and the ninth supplements the account by tracing the mechanical progress to which the industrial revolution was mainly due. The tenth chapter reviews the formation of the theory of political economy, which was to powerfully aid the development of industrialism. The eleventh and twelfth chapters treat respectively of physical science and philosophy. The aim of the former is to show how in many of its branches inductive research was placed on a new basis from which inquiry has proceeded to the present state of knowledge: that of the latter is to show how the deeper problems of existence received a new statement in Germany, which with

the tendencies of British thought, has governed speculation till our own day. In Germany, too, closely connected with the national regeneration and rich in humanising elements, occurred a literary revival which is the subject of Chapter xiii. In England, also, literature entered on a new development which enabled it to respond to the needs of an expanded society, and to contribute to European culture. This subject is reviewed in Chapter xiv.; but the literary innovations in France, and some even in Germany, which fall within the chronological limits covered by the above events, are so manifestly characteristic of the time of reaction that it would have exceeded the purpose of this book to have included them in the same survey.

A concluding chapter briefly comments on the results of the foregoing reviews, and points out that the historical problem of our time far transcends the scope of the dictum that history is past politics and that politics are present history. The dominant order of changes is now, indeed, industrial. It is the striving of men to obtain wealth and material comfort that in this age mainly determines the form and objects of their political organisation. It is this which sets the aims of their self-culture and the ideals of their scientific research, the ends of their religious exercises and the rules of their individual conduct. What in past times was determined by reverence for God, the state, and the family, or by fear of present or future punishment, is now for the most part controlled by the principles of co-opera-

tive production and distribution; and only in a secondary manner do the ideas of social perfection and individual development, of speculative truth and positive belief, influence the policy which proximate utility dictates. Yet the period bears no resemblance to those moments of history when ease and luxury have been the guiding ends of a ruling few. The principle of comfort for all has yet to be exhibited in its full meaning; but it is as clearly of quite peculiar character as its realisation is evidently the function of our age. Perhaps it is because this relation has not been sufficiently recognised that, though we are continually under the necessity of making rough conjectural applications of history to current questions, historical science is still far from capable of meeting present wants.

Occasion has usually offered itself for mention of my principal sources of information, but in a general work of this kind it is impossible to refer all such obligations to their original authors. For much help in correcting the work for the press my thanks are due to my friend, Mr. W. H. Hadow, who also kindly aided me with information on the history of music.

A. W.

ENFIELD,

*February, 1886.*



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# The Historical Basis of Modern Europe.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

“ ’Tis time  
New hopes should animate the world, new light  
Should dawn from new revealings to a race  
Weighed down so long, forgotten so long.”

*Robert Browning.*

By the beginning of the eighteenth century Europe had abandoned for ever the feudal system of the Middle Ages. Monarchies had long usurped the powers of government. They had successfully centralised authority in their own hands, and had made themselves independent of partially responsible delegates. They had given internal peace to the districts brought under their rule; and the communities, which had thus been permitted to expand, had developed far beyond the limits covered by the old institutions. They presided over important classes, the products of the civilisation they guarded, which were unknown to the purely feudal *régime*; while the classes, which still seemed to fill the places they formerly occupied, had been deprived by the royal policy and the

progress of society of their original basis and functions. And as the monarchies had possessed themselves of a monopoly of the management of internal public affairs, so they had rendered themselves indispensable to the control of external relations. Having welded the people into nations, a system of international intercourse had grown up under their auspices, which could neither be neglected without constant danger to the communities, nor be entrusted to the care of others without grave, even if temporary, inconvenience. In short, the modern state was too firmly founded to admit the possibility of a return to mediæval feudalism ; and monarchy had strongly established itself at the head.

Yet, though irrevocably superseded, the feudal order still retained a powerful hold upon European institutions. In most countries there still remained nearly intact a great part of the old organisation which sovereigns had not found it in their power or to their interest to destroy. From a feudal basis the monarchies had risen, and on a feudal basis they continued to rest. Hardly an institution existed beneath the throne, which did not bear on its face proof of derivation from the Middle Ages ; and the thrones themselves were often surrounded by customs and limitations which indicated to the least careful observer the origin from which they had sprung. The whole social structure was still formed after a mediæval type, notwithstanding the circumstance that it possessed a supreme centre invested with such attributes of monarchy as its antiquated institutions would permit. The

✓ peasantry, when not sunk in serfage, was still subject to feudal dues and exactions; the nobility, though stripped of its ancient power, still enjoyed most of the privileges and exemptions it had ✓ possessed in the days of its territorial greatness, together with new ones awarded as compensation for its confiscated power; the Church, where Catholicism still guarded its acquisitions from secular impiety and Protestant reform, likewise retained its share of material and social advantages ✓ with a large measure of its intolerance and darkness; the armies, though by their regular maintenance the final triumph of monarchy had been achieved, were divided into grades to correspond with the division between the nobility and the peasantry; manufacturing industry and trade were controlled by an elaborate and cramping system of guilds, monopolies, and fiscal hindrances; municipal constitutions were founded either on charter, often obtained by repeated purchase, or on mediæval tradition; the law cheated equity with outworn precedents, and with delays, the worst product of confusion, while justice itself was perverted by prescriptive inequalities, and stained with the cruelty of barbarous times. This social organisation the sovereign power strove to adapt to its authority and demands; and when not checked by very powerful ancient interests, or thwarted by inadequate machinery, it generally succeeded in appropriating all the available national resources. Available, however, many of the national resources were not: but what the crown failed to secure was absorbed by the spongy texture of the rotten fabric,

and did not obey the laws of social gravitation by remaining to alleviate the existence of the hard-worn producers.

The result of this persistence of an effete system along with the development of a new order, was naturally very disastrous to the greater part of society. The former rulers and leaders of the people still received their dues and advantages without performing in return their corresponding duties. Nay, where they retained a pretence to responsibility, they too often abused their office, or sold it to extortioners. They had been rendered superfluous by the course of events, yet they still enjoyed the most splendid share of the good things produced by the community. The power which had displaced them did not, however, demand one whit the less reward for doing the work. On the contrary, instrumental though it had been in dragging the people out of the feudal mire, it contracted, in addition to the faults which human frailty rendered inevitable, some very oppressive and almost incorrigible vices in consequence of the presence of the useless aristocracy. The better to secure the willing homage of the territorial nobility, monarchy had enveloped itself in a magnificence irresistibly attractive to a vain and idle caste; while it also kept at the public expense a host of rich and dignified offices and sinecures, which could be dispensed as rewards to those notables who were fortunate enough to win favour, or were formidable enough to require conciliation. Nor were these burdens redeemed by economy in the necessary expenses of government,



for it is notorious that in this respect the new order could claim no advantage over the old, while it was more subject to wasteful and corrupt practices. To all of which charges must be added frequent engagements in long and costly wars undertaken from ambitious, frivolous, and unworthy motives, naturally prevalent at a centre dominated by ideas of splendour and power, and far removed from the sufferings inflicted on a country by every kind of belligerent operation. The nations, moreover, found in the economic policy of the monarchies no help to enable them to sustain these gratuitous burdens. Though with the internal pacification of the land and the expansion of society, industry had long outgrown the swaddling clothes indispensable to it in infancy, little had been done to ease it from their stifling folds; nay, so pernicious had been the effects of shortsighted avarice, so steeped in delusion was national economic policy, that the fiscal regulations seemed to be contrived with fixed intent to aggravate to the utmost the tightness of these bands.

The ecclesiastical foundation was, perhaps, as rotten as any part of the feudal *régime*, but it scarcely merits the unqualified condemnation which the privileges of the nobility, the trade corporations, and the central and provincial fiscs, seldom escape. The vast possessions and feudal powers of the Church no longer served their original purpose, and beside being to this extent harmful to the interests of the community, were generally misapplied, to the utter demoralisation of the higher clergy, and the monstrous multiplication of slothful

monks and nuns ; yet where its organisation touched the wants of the people, it probably satisfied them as well as was practicable under the circumstances. Through its lower clergy and charitable institutions it did much to comfort the classes crushed by the burdens imposed by this unequally constituted state of society, and it afforded in some sort a refuge to those too unkindly stricken by an ignoble lot.

Europe, then, it is evident, needed thorough social regeneration. It would have been the better for judicious reform from the moment when invasion by the new order rendered superfluous a single detail of the ancient institutions. But history teaches that reforms are seldom timely, and that hitherto they have been usually remedies for the insufferable rather than wise concessions to the inevitable. Nevertheless it would be erroneous to suppose that the evils under which Europe was groaning could find reparation by simply becoming extreme. Evils do not overbalance by their own sheer inordinate weight. Evil alone never determines the point beyond which reform cannot be deferred ; undisturbed it merely hastens on to the mute paralysis of death : the kingdom of darkness never spontaneously divides against itself. In the collapse of the rottenest systems the action of some extraneous factor is ever discernible. The maladies from which Europe was suffering might have been a thousand-fold worse, yet they would have been only the more obstinate if left to mortify in their own corruption. The prospects of speedy improvement depended on the interference of some agency sufficiently strong, well-situated, and instructed, at

once to upset the existing equilibrium and to point out a better ideal for reconstruction.

In the fulness of time such a power did arise,—a power as potent and searching towards oppression and abuse as fire towards dross, and bracing beyond measure to the human spirit long cribbed within the stiffened arms of dead tradition. This was the so-called eighteenth-century movement. Never before did an intangible force so overwhelm society. It mastered the talent of the time; it gained respect, often homage, from kings; it fascinated the nobility; enchanted the middle classes, and, finally, percolated downwards to produce a ferment in the lowest strata. As once the enlightenment of Gautama the Buddha was welcomed with eagerness by millions keenly sensitive to the divisions and sorrows of their existence, and was fraught with serious practical effects for the supine and mystic minds of Asia, so this enlightenment of the philosophers, as its professors were called, came to be embraced with joy by whole nations seared with social distinctions and vexations, and was pregnant with startling practical consequences for the impatient, active minds of Western Europe.

But the movement was not due to the proselytising fervour of some inspired evangelist, or to the persuasive example of some beautiful character, nor did a supreme founder stamp its gospel with dogmatic authority. Empty, vain, and babbling, as it may seem to the sages of to-day, it was to its generation a spring of wisdom welling from the recesses of the past up to the surface of human life.

It was a great revulsion of feeling against established evil, excited by the 'world coming to a consciousness' of its advance in knowledge and in reason. The discoveries of science and the gropings of philosophy had given man courage to confront his life, to probe it, to judge it, and to condemn in it what seemed to him not good.

Persuaded that he had learnt to know good from evil, he subjected his existence to such a scrutiny as, two centuries earlier, the Protestant reformers had applied to his religion. Great names are associated with certain aspects of this movement, but to no individual did it owe its existence or success. As it burst spontaneously to the surface, so it swept along by its own irresistible force, independent of the fortunes of a name, unhindered by the vicissitudes of a clique.

✓1. Though essentially an intellectual movement, it was of course primarily founded on that progress of society which had taken place beneath the ægis of monarchy. No world-compelling influence springs but from a soil prepared by worthy precursors. But too often the younger power has to assail in the discharge of its mission the shortcomings of its parental support. And such a duty was not escaped by that enlightenment which would never have illumined the Europe of last century unless the culture it represented had been made possible by the order which the monarchical system had bestowed. Its onset, however, was mainly directed against feudal abuses and ecclesiastical imposition; and kings incurred attack only so far as they were guilty of tolerating and perpetuating

these evils, or were inclined to create others as bad by arrogating to their office rights and sanctions inconsistent with the progress and welfare of society. Whatever was seen to oppress the individual in mind or body was exposed and held up to burning obloquy; whatever appeared anomalous, grotesque, cumbersome, or fraudulent was given a prey to scathing ridicule. Nothing was too venerable, too sacred, or too august for irrelevant discussion. Into one omnivorous crucible of criticism was thrown every heritage from the past. x y

It was indeed the age of criticism. "Unser Zeitalter ist das eigentliche Zeitalter der Kritik, der sich alles unterwerfen muss," said Kant in 1781 when he launched forth the most tremendous engine of subversion which the old world has had to encounter. Kant's own criticism was as far removed from the prevailing tone as judgment is from mockery, yet the age is rightly thus characterised if recklessness and crudeness of method can assure it the title, in preference to our own inquisitive reforming time. For the power of the dominant criticism is not to be found in a happy combination of energy and determination with sound knowledge and ripe wisdom. Rather it was because its destructive force and persistence were unhindered by wise regard for the less apparent conditions of life, that its onset was so desperate and unflinching. The vexations and anomalies of the effete social state provoked the hostility of the intelligence which had exercised itself in the physical investigations of Newton, and in the analytical metaphysic of Locke. At the hands of such an adversary, the ✓

traditional order could not but receive uncere-  
 monious treatment. No historic sense tempered  
 indignation against prescriptive abuse; \* no con-  
 sciousness of an unredeemable debt to the past  
 cooled the wrath aroused by its baneful legacies  
 to society; no well-considered lore extenuated the  
 crimes of the existing order by giving a glimpse  
 into the dangers and difficulties which beset the  
 path of social development. But as rash observers  
 of nature impute apparent anomalies to devilish or  
 capricious design, so did the critics of this forlorn  
 social state ridicule and declaim against every  
 blemish, as if it were the work of deliberate villainy  
 and guile. And there was no one sufficiently well-  
 informed and eloquent to indict them before the  
 people for ignorant travesty; but outraged reason  
 and smarting feelings ever conspired to secure the  
 reception of their doctrines. No wonder then, that  
 they converted the public to their views; no wonder  
 that Burke had occasion to lament that all the  
 solemn plausibilities of the world had lost their  
 reverence and effect.

If this indiscriminating warfare can be rightly  
 called criticism, it can no less justly be regarded as  
 the campaign of rationalism. The contest was, in  
 fact, an assault by human reason upon what seemed  
 irrational in human fate; and though the reason

\* That the critical movement never came under the discipline  
 of sober and candid retrospection is not inconsistent with the  
 fact, that the writings of Montesquieu, Turgot, and Voltaire  
 introduced a new era of historical study, and that even in the  
 famous book of Helvetius, a new and truer view of the past  
 found expression. But these were consequences rather than  
 determining factors of the movement.

engaged was not very profound, it was nevertheless reason as it is possessed by the human race. Herein lies the great significance of the episode. Criticism may be merely an appeal to reason in a conflict produced by collision of prejudices or personal interests. Reason is then only an instrument, used so long as it serves the purpose of a weapon, and when laid aside it leaves only incidental effects. Criticism, again, may be the ordeal by which reason itself spontaneously tests the products of unreason. Criticism is then accompanied by progress. It becomes a battle in behalf of the good and true against the bad and false, which is waged with the most trustworthy weapons owned by men. Wherever such an operation is conducted on a large scale, there will be produced notable and beneficial results; and thus it came about that the eighteenth century, with all its miseries and monstrosities, was yet an age distinguished for intellectual advance.

The nature of the progress to which this criticism gave origin, necessarily came out most distinctly in ideas. Ideas are the only vehicles through which criticism can gain expression in action; and while much of its teaching may prove abortive in practice, no part of it can come to the proof or pose as an element in immediate or future progress, except by first presenting itself to the world as a conceivable idea. The militant rationalism dealt only in few and simple ideas, for its hasty and unrefined method cut it off as much from numerous as from subtle doctrines. Nevertheless it produced a grand and memorable body of progressive notions. Paucity

in number and want of subtlety invested them with serious danger; but these defects cannot be charged solely to the vices inherent in the criticism, when it is remembered that the order attacked abounded in minute and intricate developments of abuse, and by sheer force of repulsion drove a reforming spirit into the opposite extreme.

The first step in the evolution of progressive ideas was significant of its ulterior results. With the infidelity of the English Deists, the war on the continent against the Church and feudalism was directly connected, and may be said to have originated. Until the belief that the world was governed by Divine ordinance, and that the Christian Church was the representative on earth of this supernatural dispensation, had been discredited, it was impossible for rationalism to approach the existing social arrangements with unfettered action. This condition English Deism effectually performed so far as the thinkers of the continent were concerned. In its own home, Deism neither enjoyed a sufficiently prosperous career, nor was surrounded by appropriate circumstances, to affect very seriously the current social creed. Its sceptical attacks were met by a number of orthodox divines, who knew well how to plead their cause with effect before the English mind; and its tendency to encourage free-thinking was not likely to influence materially the national manner of regarding social questions in a country where Protestantism had long been dominant, and had recently issued triumphant from a revolutionary conflict with one of the Lord's anointed. On the continent, however, neither



able apologists, nor sober habits of independent judgment and action, existed to dull the zest for sceptical doctrines, which possessed the attractions of novelty, and a natural affinity to the nascent temper of mind. They addressed themselves with more than their real cogency to an eager audience, and they combined with a debased version of metaphysic from the same country to flatter the thinkers of civilised Europe, that they had at last obtained complete freedom from the bonds of superstition, and the possession of a philosophy which would enable them to form anew the life of man on a basis sound as eternal truth, and worthy of the dignity of human nature.

The teaching gained reception through a people especially open to its charms, and peculiarly fitted to be its promulgator. In those days France, though ready to borrow the thoughts of England, possessed the intellectual hegemony of continental Europe. French was the language of culture and polite society in all lands, and French works were classics for the whole reading public. France, having exhausted its race of great writers of the seventeenth century, yet not without having learnt from Descartes and Malebranche the art of pursuing serious metaphysical studies with great literary effect, had been left by Bayle in a state of fertile receptiveness for any philosophical theorising, which might prove a relief to the hollowness of the society bequeathed to Europe by Louis XIV., without visiting its frailties with the austerity of a rigorous creed. Transplanted to this soil, the infidelity, the sensational philosophy, and the

Newtonian science of England, produced a growth of lax ethics, of scientific scepticism, and shallow metaphysic, which permitted the society to indulge its immoral proclivities, absolved it from conscientious contrition and the dread of future punishment, and at the same time interested it with serious discussion. This intellectual tendency thence spread through Europe, and became the most marked characteristic of the age.

Though scepticism was an indispensable element in the progressive movement, it was not of itself an idea of progress. Yet there was a very close logical connection between the scepticism and the main notions for which it prepared the way. Men came to distrust both the dogmas of revealed religion and the pretensions of the established order to Divine dispensation, because they had come to acquire more confidence in their own reason and intrinsic dignity;—in other words, because they had come to regard themselves, not as cyphers to which artificial value was given by an external power, but as units possessing the same inherent worth, though ranged in a very variously graduated order. Hence followed the theory of the natural equality of men, which appears throughout the movement under the guise of philanthropy, humanitarianism, democratic ideals, individualism, belief in human perfectibility, and which gave the keynote to the tritest complaint of the time but echoed by Rousseau, when he announced that men were born free but are everywhere in chains. From the doctrine of the natural equality of men, sprang the whole portentous brood of eighteenth century

ideas. Whether quickened by pity into philanthropy, or by sympathy into humanitarianism, the doctrine remained essentially the same. Whether logic deduced from it the rights of man, democratic principles of government, the delegated nature of the office of the chief magistrate, the axioms of social and personal liberty, or the Utopian consequences which would follow its complete recognition, it never lost its identity. Even the sentimental enthusiasm for the state of nature, was but a reflex from the dreams of the equality, which nature was believed to have intended man to realise.

The passion for equality was not, however, incompatible with confidence in the good offices of despotism. Desire for disciplined freedom was still distant from the minds of men accustomed to accept all amelioration from the hands of monarchy, and to render to their sovereign implicit obedience. And herein again the influence of France made itself strongly felt. In no country had the absolute power of the crown more firmly established itself, or struck deeper root into the minds of the people, than in the land where the doctrines of equality were elucidated and expounded for the rest of Europe. No sturdy national instinct existed here to fend impetuous malcontents from a delusive belief in the illimitably beneficial powers which a well-intentioned monarch might exercise; no participation in public affairs kept the literary theorists aware of the practical difficulties which hedge even the benevolence of kings. But long disuse of the liberties of self-government, and the severe tutelage to which the crown had subjected the nation, had

well-nigh destroyed all manly trust of the people in their own persevering efforts to govern themselves, and had entirely deprived them of the faculty of addressing themselves to such business without first serving a troublous apprenticeship. The gravest advocates of reform congratulated the country on its possession of a head, who, without risking the compromises of party warfare, could yet give it perfect institutions by the well-directed exercise of lawful prerogative. The fancied liberties of the English people were often regarded with contempt. The restrictions of a traditional constitution were conceived to defeat the possibility of a true emancipation.

Nor were these sanguine expectations unwarranted by the situation itself, and the actual events of the time. Of the recognised powers into which European society was then divided, the first which seemed to have claims to the reforming *rôle* was certainly the crown. Not only were the selfish interests of the aristocracy and higher clergy inimical to change, as were those of the members of the legal and burgher corporations, but the prospect of solid advantage appeared to conspire with the promptings of traditional function to induce monarchs to bring their states out of the slough of anomaly and inequality. What could better promise to increase the number of their subjects than measures for adjusting fortunes to a natural level? What could better save them from the vexations of an inelastic revenue than an equable distribution of taxation and the grant of freedom to the spontaneous energies of their people? How

could they hope to obtain better servants or more able ministers than by inviting merit to serve the state without distinction of birth, and by opening to all responsible and arduous offices a road for those classes whose minds and faculties had been trained, developed, and informed, in the real business of life? Whence could they expect to get faithful and enlightened teachers for their people if the popular and established religion were disfigured by careless and sensual dignitaries, and the way to more worthy means of instruction were barred by priestly intolerance? Was uprightness, zeal, or endurance, to be counted on if honesty were continually defrauded of its reward, if sincerity were subjected to persecution, if perseverance met with insurmountable barriers of arbitrary distinction and privilege, if favour took the place of sterling worth, and merit were supplanted by titled sycophancy? In what region did they suppose spirit, courage, industry, and integrity most to abound if not in a state where all men felt the spur of possible success, and victory remained with the strongest and wisest; where lies were tolerated neither in persons nor institutions; and where self-respect was engendered in the humblest, by a right to deal with others as a man with men, and to realise his measure of strength as he thought best? Or did they suppose that a dainty court, with an apathetic burgher class and a pauper peasantry, formed the best possible state for a sovereign to rule and hand down to his descendants? Obscured as was often their view of the real state of affairs by the conditions of their station, and frivolous when not vicious, as were

frequently their characters, the princes as a body could not entirely fail to see which social system would most enure to their advantage. And if self-interest attracted them to become the regenerators of modern society, their power unmistakably singled them out as the executors of any considerable reform. Though not omnipotent, their authority so far transcended that of any other body in their states that, while little or nothing could be achieved without their sanction or connivance, a determined and judicious effort on their part was capable of carrying through, even in the teeth of vested interests, the most extensive improvements.

## CHAPTER II.

### MONARCHY AS A REFORMER.

"Though all kinds of government be improved in modern times, yet monarchical government seems to have made the greatest advances towards perfection. It may now be affirmed of civilized monarchies, what was formerly said in praise of republics alone, that they are a government of Laws, not of Men. They are found susceptible of order, method, and constancy, to a surprising degree. Property is there secure; industry encouraged; the arts flourish; and the prince lives secure among his subjects, like a father among his children. It must, however, be confessed, that, though monarchical governments have approached nearer to popular ones, in gentleness and stability; they are still inferior. Our modern education and customs instil more humanity and moderation than the ancient; but have not as yet been able to overcome entirely the disadvantages of that form of government."

*David Hume.*

"Le souverain bien loin d'être le maître absolu des peuples qui sont sous sa domination, n'en est lui-même que le premier domestique."—*Frederick the Great.*

MONARCHY did not ignore the claim of progress on its resources, and the appeal of enlightenment to its interests; nor did it refuse to take counsel with the irresponsible thinkers. Contemporaneously with the intellectual movement, the policy of many rulers was directed with especial energy towards the more complete defeudalisation of their states and the better co-ordination of their administrative functions. And as these steps were taken partly in recognition of the social principles

recommended by speculatists, so they reacted again upon the theories of writers and confirmed their reliance on the exertions of sovereigns. But the reaction was not exactly a rebound of the original influence. The reforming monarchs were by no means mere pupils of the philosophers. They were rather co-operators with a lesson of their own to enforce. The lesson, it is true, agreed well with the doctrine of the theorists, but it was none the less the property of the sovereigns. It consisted in overruling with entire want of tenderness everything which stood in the way of their plans and aggrandisement. Were they plighted engagements, ancient treaties, respectable traditions, or recognised rights of sentient individuals;—if they did not possess sufficient vigour to secure respect, or were not conveniently adapted to the schemes in hand, they had to submit to every inconsiderate treatment at the hands of reforming absolutism. Undoubtedly this conduct was generally due to the eagerness of the monarchs to increase their own power, and can seldom be justified by reference to an impatient anxiety to make an end of social wrong or to a horrified indignation at feudal abuse; but it did much to add to the finer feelings and ideas of the age, the apparently incongruous elements of arbitrary force and violent injustice.

The first great reforming monarch of the century was not, however, immediately concerned with the defeudalising process in Western Europe. Peter the Great, if judged by the effect of his work on the development of Russia, and thus indirectly on that of Europe, must be considered one of the greatest



figures of the eighteenth century; but the state of Russia at that time was too far removed from that of its more advanced neighbours, for his reign to present many points of direct contact with the liberalism of the Western monarchies. Yet he has claims to an honourable position among the reforming sovereigns who heralded the Revolution; and these are strengthened rather than weakened by the reproaches of backwardness to which his country was open. Indeed the frank confessions of the barbarism of Russia, which Peter himself made to the world at every turn of his career, contributed to the effect he produced on the mind of Europe. For this effect was in great measure due to the grandeur of his success, which vividly brought before the world the immense benefits conferrable by absolute power on a state at certain stages of its growth; and this grandeur was enhanced as the magnitude of the difficulties which he had to overcome was better understood. The transfer of the hegemony of the North from Sweden to Russia, and the conversion of the latter from an Asiatic state into an influential European power, were events which demonstrated in good season the possible strength of autocracy. Henceforth the Western states had to reckon with a Russian factor in their international policy;—an obligation, it is true, which at first they believed to involve few less favourable incidents than assistance in partitioning Poland, or gratuitous crusades for the discomfiture of the Turk, but which nevertheless urged with considerable cogency the possibilities within the reach of absolute power. Such a lesson was the

less likely to be missed when the traditions of the age of Louis XIV. were still alive, and autocracy was still invested with the recommendations which fashionable patronage could bestow; for, though the failure of the Grand Monarque has exposed to later generations the evils and temptations which beset the absolute throne, an antidote of this kind was far too unpalatable for kings of that time to administer to themselves.

Nor did the effects of Peter's example stop here. Semi-barbarian though he was, and benighted as was his country, he exhibited in a conspicuous manner traits peculiarly characteristic of the liberal absolutism of the eighteenth century. To guide him in reforming the internal administration of Russia he had recourse to the philosopher, Leibnitz; and to help him in improving the material and intellectual resources of his country, he laid under contribution every department of western civilisation. He despised no part of the enlightenment of his time, and ever showed himself to be animated by its spirit. The solid profits to be gained by war, whether just or unjust, were as little obscured in his mind by the glamour of military glory as in that of any diplomatic huckster of the century; and his rule was despotic to a degree known only by Russia among European nations: yet he showed himself above all inspired with the belief that he was the trustee for his people, that it was for his nation that he worked, and that in his nation he would find the only worthy and enduring success. He loved the Russian people, says Kostomárof, not in the sense of the Russians contemporary with

and subject to him, but in the sense of that ideal to which he wished to bring the people.\* To his soldiers on the field of Pultava he declared that they were fighting for Russia and not for their Tsar, who was ready to sacrifice his life for his country's weal; and when caught in the power of the Turkish Vizier on the Pruth he was believed to have sent a letter to the Senate at home warning its members that in all probability he would be taken prisoner, and peremptorily forbidding them to execute any command they might receive purporting to come from him in captivity. This letter has been pronounced a forgery,† but its extended currency at least demonstrates the general notion entertained of Peter's conception of his office; and Frederick the Great only confirmed the lesson embodied by the legend, when from his camp in Silesia he commanded Podewils that if he were taken alive his orders were not to be respected, and the state should purchase his liberty by no unworthy means. More explicitly Peter set forth the same doctrine on the occasion of his decree investing the Tsars with the power of appointing their successors to the throne. He grounded the law on the duty of the Tsar to leave the realm in the most capable hands, and abstained from restricting the choice of a successor to the royal blood. Though maintaining that the power of the Emperor was unlimited and irresponsible, he sanctioned with his approval the writing of Feofan Prokopowitsch, one of his few enlightened ecclesiastics, in which Russian autocracy was de-

\* Cited by Schuyler : *Peter the Great*, ii. 648.

† Schuyler : *Peter the Great*, ii. 243.

clared to rest not on Divine right, but on power delegated from the people.\* He claimed to be absolute and irresponsible, but only in order to serve the interests of his nation.

For Russia itself, Peter's greatest work was the annihilation of those barriers which had shut out the country from the influences of European civilisation. Contact with the West was his prime concern and his most fruitful achievement. The destruction of the Streltsi—a great advance, though the reputation of these irregular troops has suffered much injustice from their resemblance to the Janissaries,—his administrative reforms, his foundation of a system of popular education, his transference to the crown of the power of the patriarchate, his endeavours to disseminate knowledge, and his attempt to lay upon Slavic barbarism a veneer of foreign manners, would have wrought but little had the country been left in Muscovite seclusion. As it was, Russia did not immediately profit to any great extent by these internal improvements. The force of the conservative opposition was so great that Peter's reforms would have sunk into abeyance on the removal of the stern will which had thrust them on a reluctant people, unless influences from abroad had continued with short intermissions to breathe into them vital energy. When Peter died, the empire fell into the hands of an oligarchy, tutored by the example of Sweden on the death of Charles XII.; and public spirit remained still unknown in the Russian state. In his lifetime, Peter found it impossible to form a staff of honest and capable

\* Bernhardi : *Gesch. Russlands*, ii. 2, p. 58.

agents; and when he did not employ foreigners he had to depend on terror to secure the execution of his commands. On his death, the one Russian patriot was no more, and all hope of further progress depended on the operation of foreign civilisation, or the appearance of some great and enlightened successor.

On the organisation of classes, Peter left a deep and lasting impression. From him Russian society took a new departure, which has served to carry it on to its present position. Unfortunate in its final results, his action in this respect was not uniformly beneficial at the outset. Indeed, to the serfs his legislation, intent on rendering the resources of the country more available to the crown, was on the whole decidedly detrimental. Though possessed with a genuine desire to improve their condition, his efforts to bring the peasantry within the toils of the fisc and the conscription so far defeated his benevolent intentions that the serfs were rather degraded into slaves, than helped to assert the rights of freemen. Nay, in some cases agrarian liberty was directly subverted, and in others the bondsmen of the soil were turned into personal chattels. On the other hand, to the commercial classes he was a father, for it was from him that the urban population received definite recognition and status, and that industry and the arts first obtained instruction and encouragement. The nobility he placed on an entirely new basis and imbued with a fresh spirit. Not only did he insist upon its members acquiring the elements of education, and often sent the younger ones abroad to

learn arts and methods unknown at home, but he converted the whole order from an aristocracy by birth into a hierarchy by service.\* Under him the magnates lost their exclusive place, the princes and Boyars were deprived of their high positions, and all the nobles were invited, or rather compelled, to become officials of their emperor, and to obtain their rank by the dignity of their office. He instituted fourteen degrees of the Tchin, corresponding to the grades of military rank, which were repeated in the civil service, the navy, the court, and the Church. Thus rank and office were made equivalents, birth was prohibited from lending dignity to apathy and incapacity, and, though the rigour of this system was considerably relaxed during succeeding reigns, the members of the noble caste were lastingly enlisted in the service of the modern state.

Hence it came about that the upper classes of Russian society were drawn with wonderful rapidity into the vortex of European civilisation, while the bulk of the people remained almost stationary. Chained to the soil and service of superiors, the Russian boors were cut off from all access to the West; the traders pursued their calling, unharassed by the difficulties of the Archangel route, and slowly drew through the Baltic the advantages of intercourse with more advanced nations; the nobility, persuaded to renounce territorial impor-

\* This is speaking comparatively. Technically the Boyars formed an aristocracy by service, their fiefs were held on certain conditions, and their dignity was adjusted according to the services which they and their ancestors had rendered to the Tsar. By Peter's time their position had become practically hereditary.

tance, left the country void of a landlord's care and the crown free from encroachment, while it sought honourable employment by thronging the government service, and strove to shine by assuming the semblance of European culture. Over the result to which this arrangement has been moving, obscurity hangs to this day. The definite gain so far is a place in Europe for Russia; and, however detrimental to domestic government may the superior attraction of foreign politics be rated, since Asiatic isolation has hitherto proved to be for Russia equivalent to Asiatic inertness, this achievement must be reckoned one of the first order. As the originality of Peter's reforms has been overstated, so the permanence of much that he accomplished has been exaggerated, but it is certain that to his despotic, restless rule, was due Russia's initial stage in the pursuit of western civilisation.

In no way does Peter's connection with European progress show itself more plainly than in the affinity of his career to that of the monarch who was most deeply engaged in bringing to a focus the tendencies of the time. From Peter the Great it is natural to pass to Frederick II. of Prussia. In the work of both men, sternness of character combined with quick intelligence, unscrupulousness allied with devotion to the aggrandisement of their states, application to business supported by a cruel disposition towards war as its instrument, are so prominent that the history of the one inevitably suggests that of the other. Above all, both, though despotic, were conscious of the ministering nature of their office. But the primary conditions

of their careers were different ; for while Peter by his sole exertions compelled a vast empire to enter irrevocably into the fertilising medium of European civilisation, Frederick was but the most brilliant member of a house whose renown it is to have created, by strenuous and repeated personal exertions, a powerful and influential state out of a small and barren province. There were Hohenzollerns who had done all that man could do to increase the extent and importance of Brandenburg before Frederick II. raised the kingdom of Prussia to be the rival of the House of Hapsburg. Yet, if he cannot share with Peter I. the dignity of having given Europe a new state, he at any rate deserves the fame of having so far completed the work of his forefathers as to have assured to Prussia a grand future without demanding from his successors more than the distinguishing prudence and common sense of his family. He was, moreover, the central figure among the rulers of his time no less by reason of his intellectual activity and personal opinions, than by reason of his success in war and politics.

We may, indeed, search in vain the life of the semi-civilised Tsar for parallels to much which made the career of the philosopher of Sans-souci important for Europe. His country was already a sharer in the general fund of European culture ; and he himself was in closest connection with the spirit of the age, and eminently qualified to be its exponent from the throne. An aspirant to literary fame, delighting in the society of the writers of the day, and thoroughly informed with French taste and ideas, he commanded the attention of his gene-



ration in the great world-debate that was then going on almost as effectually as he dictated to it terms in diplomacy and war. Through him the doctrines of enlightenment, charged with official authority, addressed themselves to the intellect of society, while his deeds supported them to its coarser elements. From his pen, through his precept, by his example, the truth that the sovereign is the first servant of the state gained notoriety and associations which it has not lost to this day.\* In exact agreement with the prevailing opinions, his insistence on the menial functions of a king caused a stir, the significance of which is apt to be overlooked by us who are accustomed to hear from monarchs profuse professions of their subordination to the common weal. Very influential, too, was his accompanying idea of the state. If under Frederick II. the Prussian monarchy had not exhibited to the world a conspicuous example of success attained by claiming unlimited authority for government, men would in later days have put less faith in the efficacy of mere legislation and administration. More powerful still was the effect of the general report to which his words and doings gave rise. The appearance in the political arena of a monarch, whose evident mission it was to endorse the teaching of speculative liberalism, acted on the public mind as a warrant to the advanced thinkers which they were not slow to appreciate. How could

\* "Friedrich II.," says Bluntschli, "ist in Wahrheit nicht bloss der Begründer eines neuen Staatswesens, sondern ebenso der erste und vornehmste Repräsentant der modernen Staatsidee."  
—*Gesch. der Neuern Staatswissenschaft*, p. 261.

criticism of the existing order fail in plausibility when one of the rulers was himself an energetic innovator, and was eager to be reckoned among the men of enlightenment? That a king arose who was mercilessly severe towards shams of every kind, who ruthlessly destroyed whatever withstood his designs on the mere plea of respectable antiquity, who was full of bitter sayings against folly and vice in high places no less than against effeteness in outworn institutions, was an event more favourable to the cause of reform than perhaps any single episode of the century, if we except the independence of America.

Yet Frederick the Great was far from embodying fully the progressive spirit of the age. Cynical by nature, he learnt to treat life with a grim distrust utterly foreign to the hopefulness which was about to animate Europe. The period of his intellectual formation was, unfortunately, almost synchronous with the purely sceptical phase of the progressive movement; his natural temper, instead of being mollified by intercourse with the cultivated world, was hardened into a rigid indifference to the more generous elements of human life; and consequently he remained insensible to those spontaneous efforts towards improvement, of which society was then giving tokens. He never brought himself abreast with the last quarter of the century, nor did he understand that he had lost touch with the times through want of sympathy with men's aspirations; and before he died he had yielded his position as the cynosure of Europe to Joseph II. of Austria.

Long the foremost figure in Europe, Frederick

was yet more prominent in his own state. The father, who had created for him by stolid thrift and resolute management the army and funds by which he so roughly elbowed for Prussia an eminent place in Europe, also left him a system of administration carefully adapted for the personal supervision and military discipline of the whole kingdom. The craze of Frederick William for drilling soldiers and hoarding money was not a whit more intense than his passion for driving his people to their work and keeping them employed at it as he thought best for the state. In one sense this king was as much the founder of Prussia's greatness as was the Great Elector. If the latter is renowned for having raised the country by his own energy and ability from the dejection into which the Thirty Years' War had cast it, the former equally deserves the credit of having saved the state from the debilitating influences imported by the first Hohenzollern who called himself king, and of developing in his people the virtues of obedience, industry, and economy. These contributed at least as much to the success of Frederick the Great and the aggrandisement of the realm as did the activity and adroitness of the last of the Electors towards its being. The effect of this policy was the more considerable since, in the words of Carlyle, the common occupation of other rulers at that time was to play "burst-frog to the ox of Versailles." This Frederick II. fully understood. He was too much imbued with the ruling culture to appreciate in matters of the mind the German character and the possibilities latent within its unpolished exterior, though the

prospect of a brighter future in literature was not entirely hidden from him; but he relied on the obedience and exertions of his subjects to a degree fatuous in one less acquainted with the Prussian people. And, carrying out his maxim of a sovereign's duties, he developed the machinery of his father's governing system till he held in his own hands the threads of every department of the administration. By him the crown's control of the people, and its manifold responsibilities, were so much extended and isolated that his successors, who were of less kingly fibre, only escaped utter confusion by entirely reorganising the Prussian polity.

The rigour of such a government was crushing, aggravated as it was by gratuitous harshness in execution and by a fiscal policy, borrowed by Frederick from the French, which was often positively tyrannical; and though the oppression was much mitigated by the beneficent measures accompanying it, and especially by the king's strenuous insistence on the efficient administration of justice, it would doubtless have been intolerable if the people had not been peculiarly constituted to endure the yoke laid upon them. In some measure this patience is traceable to the serfage of the greater part of the rural population. Frederick William perceived with insight, not often attributed to him, the economical injury both to the peasantry and to the country at large of such an agrarian system; and said, in characteristic language, as early as 1719, that it would be a noble thing if his subjects enjoyed their own in freedom, and set about their business with so much the more zeal

and energy;\* but even with his high notions of the royal prerogative, he had not seen his way to reform the condition of his labouring subjects. He had been forced, by the interested conservatism of the nobility and the peasantry's unintelligent dislike of innovation, to recognise the fact that the time was not ripe for drastic measures; and he had contented himself with alleviating instead of removing the burdens of the poorer classes. His son, however, though sensible of how much the emancipation of the serfs would add to his reputation, considered that the change would too much endanger his hold on the resources of the country. He therefore left unexercised the power which he possessed to accomplish this reform; and it fell into abeyance until in the next generation national distress restored it to the royal ministers and permitted them to earn the well-deserved fame of liberating the main portion of Prussian society. Supplementary to the sedative influence of villeinage was the devotion of the nobility to the service of the crown, a circumstance at least as much due to the good judgment and wise policy of the Hohenzollerns as to the poverty of the noble families. More honourable to the ruling house was the last and most abiding cause of the patient and industrious temper of its people. With its dominion inhabited by adherents of nearly every European religious confession, this line of rulers had long followed the naturally tolerant bent of its members by granting freedom of conscience to its

\* Von Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, i., 45.

subjects; and had thereby amply atoned for its somewhat pronounced indifference to the higher forms of intellectual culture. Consequently its realm afforded a welcome refuge to the victims of religious persecution, till with fugitives from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Jews hunted from Vienna, Evangelicals from Salzburg, and numerous other like bodies of immigrants, this foreign element had become so considerable that at the death of Frederick II. it is estimated that about one-third of Prussia's population was descended from those foreigners who had settled within the dominions of the Hohenzollerns since the days of the Great Elector. The industry, gratitude, and orderliness of such subjects we in England know well to our own reward.

It is more difficult to form a conception of Frederick's relation to the Germany of the eighteenth century. At that time, as everyone knows, the Holy Roman empire was in the last stage of decay. Divided into many hundreds of principalities, varying from a manor to an independent power, whose sole bond of union was a constitution of tedious and impotent forms, it contained within itself all the elements which produce anarchy, misgovernment, and oppression, and render impossible any ideas of patriotism or efforts of self-respect. Shaped from top to bottom by feudal tradition; unvisited by the purging hand of power; demoralised above by follies and vices borrowed from the French court, and deadened below by the degraded and servile condition of the working population; torn by the jealousies and hostilities inseparable

from petty irresponsible sovereignty; ever ready to listen to the insidious designs of treacherous foreigners; it presented a spectacle of feebleness, meanness,\* and deformity, which provoked the contempt and excited the rapacity of all beholders. On such a corrupt mass the presence of a man like Frederick the Great could work little immediate good. His power and success only aroused apprehension and hatred in the minds of the rulers; among the people themselves the hardships he inflicted on his subjects produced abhorrence; while the arrogance of the Prussian soldiery and officials inflamed the dislike which plentifully subsisted between the different factions of the German nation.

Nor was the external policy of Frederick calculated to moderate such feelings. To probity it made no pretension, and however palliated to posterity by extenuating circumstances, it was to contemporaries violent and perfidious. Comprehensively regarded, and judged solely by ulterior results without thought of personal and moral considerations, his career would have had the effect of rousing the people from their torpor and of reminding them that the days of great deeds and national reforms had not passed away for ever, and might still return to save the Fatherland. But views of this kind were then as foreign to the mass

\* The best known example of sordid despotism in Germany at this period, is the traffic in soldiers between many princes and the King of England, or rather their "dear brother the Elector of Hanover," as they would put it, for the American war. It is not so well known, however, that the first offers came from the German rulers themselves, who rated the price of their fraternal help on a sliding scale of wounds and mortality.

of Germans as was the single idea that it was this state of Prussia, thus elevated by Frederick, which would some day be the main agent in Germany's regeneration. Only in the most active minds can any effect analogous to this be discerned. A few rulers, touched by the spirit of the time, took instruction and assurance from the great king's example. Here and there, among the bishoprics of the Rhineland and the lesser states, in Münster, for example, under Fürstenberg, in Mainz, again, and Köln, in Baden under Charles Frederick, and Bavaria under Maximilian Joseph, are to be found instances of more enlightened and conscientious government, springing indeed not from any thoughts of national dignity, but prompted by respect for reason and the proper functions of the state.\* But to go further it is necessary to leave the domain of immediate result, and pass into the region of

\* In one notable instance the direct influence of Frederick on German despotism proved a miserable failure. The Duke of Würtemberg, Karl Eugen, who is well known in his later years by his connection with Schiller's early life, was sent by his guardian to pass his boyhood at Frederick's court in order that he might learn the duties of enlightened sovereignty. On being declared capable of taking his place at the head of his duchy, Frederick sent him a letter, the celebrated Fürstenspiegel, telling him that providence had made him Duke only for the sake of the happiness of the people. Led, however, by love of display, Karl made himself a pensioner of France; and in order to fulfil his engagements to this power when the Seven Years' War broke out, he treated his people with a severity which was as cruel as it was contrary to the constitution of the country. This caused a contest between him and his subjects, in which he acted with such violence and tyranny that Frederick had to interfere. Karl, on the other hand, did much for education, though only in a very despotic manner.



literature. Still one act of direct benefit Frederick clearly did for Germany. He brought the rottenness of the *Reich* into such rough contact with the real conditions of things as had never been known before; and he helped more to overthrow the crumbling old institution than did any other person except Napoleon. Nevertheless, this same man was eventually forced by the ambition of a scion of the House of Austria, to call upon the Empire to defend itself against impious attack and arbitrary consolidation.

It was the Emperor Joseph II. who drove the old Frederick to this paradoxical proceeding. Frederick was aware that the Emperor was filled with that unreasoning greed for territorial aggrandisement which was then the dominant motive in European politics; and he also knew that to satisfy this desire the defeudalising, centralising measures, approved by the age and used by himself with such success, would be employed without scruple. To his cynical mind the aggressive and unscrupulous side of Joseph's character was the most apparent. Because Joseph was unsuccessful in his enterprises, and was withal not the man to command success under any circumstances, history has forborne to expose quite nakedly how deeply he was involved in the unvirtuous statecraft of his time. Yet it would appear that he was as little averse to diplomatic knavery and unjust violence as that rival whose great success with those means has earned so disproportionate an amount of vituperation. This was abundantly manifest in Joseph's foreign policy; and his innovations in his hereditary

dominions betrayed so frequently an eagerness to concentrate into his own hands all the available forces of the monarchy, that no room was left for doubt as to the primary motive of the whole scheme. Not reluctance, therefore, to resort to the political strategy of a faithless and arbitrary age distinguishes Joseph from the rest of the ambitious monarchs of the eighteenth century; and failure alone softens that glare of censorious criticism which beats upon him in common with all the despotic forerunners of the present order.

On the other hand, he was representative of his generation in a far more favourable sense. Though he wrote no "Antimachiavel" as did Frederick, nor compounded a medley of philosophical opinions such as was published by Catherine II., what expression he did give to his principles of reform succeeded in enlisting a belief in his sincere solicitude for mankind which the world never entertained of contemporary rulers, and which the world would not have accepted of this man if he had been merely a time-serving hypocrite. Doubtless the evident connection between the causes of his failure and his uncircumspect philanthropic temperament has evoked a tendency to dwell on this pleasanter aspect of his character; doubtless, too, even when thus charitably regarded, his conduct shows itself only secondarily governed by generous impulse. Still we must believe that he did indeed reflect those noble sentiments which visited society towards the close of last century, but which we are too prone to ignore when we apply to the period our rude test by results.

Consequently, though Joseph died filled with chagrin and deeply sensible of his ill success, he was not without the poor reward of posthumous fame. By cruel chance, misfortune completely blighted the latter days of his existence, and no whisper of posterity's extenuating verdict reached the dying man. He never knew that the disappointments which overwhelmed him would serve to give additional proof of his sincerity to a world, whose pitiless condemnation of failure is ever tempered by compassion for disaster. And seldom is clemency better bestowed than on the memory of this erring and chastened monarch. Rash in conception, rash in action, he was also rash in withdrawing his ill-fated decrees; but impetuosity does not alone account for his heart-broken abnegation of his schemes. There was something of true pathos in his resolution of January 1790, in which he confessed that, having introduced changes in the administration purely with the intention of furthering the general weal, and with the hope that the people after closer acquaintance would approve of them, he had at length become convinced that the people preferred the old conditions and found in them their whole happiness. "Accordingly," he continued, "I yield to their wishes, and declare the administrative order, which obtained at my accession, to be restored."\*

But such a catastrophe did not involve total loss of permanent result. It is true that the retractations of Joseph had to be confirmed and extended by his successor, the wise and enlightened Leopold II., and

\* Springer, *Geschichte Oesterreichs*, i. 24.

that the Austrian government became in the next reign the type and byword of congealed despotism; it is true that the Austro-Hungarian monarchy started on its nineteenth century career from a point little more elevated than that attained by Maria Theresa. To the lessons which the great queen learnt from the example of Prussia, to her humanity, her high estimate of education and her disciplined piety, to her appreciation of her husband's financial abilities and the wisdom of her better advisers, was due much of the administrative and military efficiency, the agrarian and fiscal improvement, the advances in industry and education, the freedom from ecclesiastical dominion, which the monarchy enjoyed at the beginning of this epoch. Nevertheless, abortive as were most of Joseph's innovations, they materially contributed towards the defeudalisation of the lands of the Hapsburgs, to the emancipation of the people from the yoke of the nobility and priesthood, and to their advancement in knowledge and toleration as well as in physical well-being. Moreover, while the reaction against Joseph's policy was the main cause of that unprofitable delay in Austria's development, which supervened on the accession of Francis II., it is to Joseph that all subsequent desire for progress must be traced. Insomuch as he failed, he failed because he was premature; and he was premature not only because his own hasty temperament and the doctrines of his philosophers made him insensible to the power of tradition and habit in human affairs, but because his people were radically unprepared. A time came when unreadiness gave way before

the influence of the modern spirit. The germ of this spirit Joseph cast into his dominions. From him dates the growth of that liberalism which eventually leavened the stolid conservatism of the Austrian Empire.

As it was in Russia that the first great liberal monarch of the century appeared, so it was there that the last was found. After the death of Peter I., the government of the country passed through many vicissitudes, but as change followed change we look in vain for the patriotism and energy of the great Tsar. Not a trace of any agent but personal and party interest is to be seen controlling the formation, life, and dissolution, of the numerous governments. The chief nobles continually sought to make the constitution a virtual oligarchy by contriving that the wearer of the crown should by some means or other be held under their influence; and the sovereigns, conscious of their faulty titles, and apprehensive of treasonable conspiracies, were ever obliged to strain to the utmost Peter's autocratic principles, and to surround themselves with a crowd of servile favourites. In fact, up to the reign of Alexander I., the main business of the Russian autocrats was the maintenance of their absolute power. Still, though all constitutional progress was thus prevented, things did not remain wholly stationary. The sovereigns were always more foreign than Russian, and their sympathies prompted them to have foreigners for their trusted servants; while the encroaching spirit of the magnates of the nation made it clearly safer policy for them to put their confidence in adventurers

from abroad, than to surrender themselves to the problematical loyalty of their more considerable subjects. As Peter had learnt most from the Dutch, so his successors sought chief guidance first from the Germans, and later from the French. Hence the foreign influence did not cease to act directly on the Russian nation, and at the same time western Europe continued indirectly to intrude its civilisation through the avenues opened by the sagacity of Peter I.

At the date of which we now speak Catherine II. was bringing to a close a long and brilliant reign. A foreigner of insignificant origin, and an usurper, she had striven to make herself popular by calling herself Russian; and she had certainly gained many partisans by this device, when plotting the ruin of her husband, whose weak intellect made his contempt for everything Muscovite irritating in the extreme. Yet she was never either Russian or popular. Her colossal ambition, alike in its beneficent and pernicious activity, defeated this result. By her military enterprises she laid on the people all the burdens which attend a policy of conquest, and thus provoked discontent throughout the country. In her endeavours to win the applause of Europe by posing as an enlightened ruler, she necessarily ran counter to what Russians regarded as their traditional, though long mistreated *régime*, and she thus constantly offended the conservative instincts which they jealously cherished as patriotism. Her own force of character, however, and her good fortune, preserved the power she failed to fortify with the affections of her people;

and the memory of the glories of her reign long outlived the regrets of which they were the occasion.

When Russians consent to remember only the agreeable in Catherine's reign, they can at least plead the desire to leave undisturbed the accepted sequel to the work of Peter the Great. The Empress claimed to be Peter's successor, and the claim has secured general assent. Her pretensions are far from being entirely justified, yet they possess enough foundation to warrant homage from the national imagination. Destitute of the grander features of Peter's character, and incomparably inferior to him in the power of controlling and training her rude subjects, she, the educated, lettered German, equally excelled him in her taste for literature, and her support of advanced ideas. In this regard she has acquired much renown; but her patronage of liberalism and culture must not be over-rated. Ambition formed its principal motive. She knew that lasting fame was to be obtained only at the hands of the thinkers and writers who had challenged the attention of the western world, and she therefore strove to gain their approval, and even, womanlike, their adulation. To suppose that she was a deliberate promoter of the revolution which was overtaking European civilisation, would be inconsistent with her conduct in later years. Her professed antipathy to the French Revolution may in some degree be accounted for by her wish to embroil the other powers in a war with France, in order that she might have her hands the more free to

carry out certain very dear but iniquitous plans of her own; but it is not doubtful that, even if her anxiety to further the freedom and welfare of the people were as intense as her staunchest upholders may contend, she never seriously thought of assisting in the work, except by the methods of despotism, nor expected any permanent results unless monarchs continued to preside. The story of her legislative assembly, gathered from the four corners of all the Russias, did good service to her fame at the time, but the year-long farce soon lost its plausibility, and is now only cited to her discredit.

Catherine was, indeed, a despot by nature and force of circumstances, and often followed impulses of tyranny which were inevitable with the ambitions she nourished. Despite being Tsaritsa of Russia, she had a wide enough view, and a strong enough hold of facts, not to forget that the most absolute authority is dependent on the disposition of the multitude, and must defer to the changes through which mankind passes in the course of its development. But in practice this attenuated form of liberalism was sorely mutilated by the evil consequences of her personal faults. It was not alone her imperious foibles that thwarted her better views. Her rule, unfortunately, was almost entirely determined by, or conducted through, those favourites, whom she attached to herself with all the prodigality of an oriental monarch, and multiplied with the profusion meet for an empress, in an age conspicuous for female frailty. In this manner, much perfidy and brutality was imported into her actions, with which she cannot be directly



charged. But vicarious responsibility of this kind forms a poor defence for a woman of the understanding of Catherine; and when all excuses on this score have been allowed, her ambition, with all its attendant wickedness and cruelty, still remains unrelieved by nobility of purpose or genuine humanity.

Though Catherine grievously missed being Peter's peer, she succeeded in giving Russia a natural complement to Peter's innovations. The purport of her wars was very different from that of his; the changes introduced by her departed in spirit far from his disinterested reforms. Happily, ambition to follow a patriot's example cannot avoid achieving something very like the results of patriotism. Under her rule no great legislative measure was inflicted upon the Russian people. That reform which would have won for her the loudest praise from her literary friends, the emancipation of the serfs, was not to be carried by one who was a foreigner, an usurper, and a female; and this being impracticable, she found it convenient, as Peter less unwittingly had done before her, to increase the area and rigour of serfage. But at the cost of much suffering and injustice, the forces of her empire were extended and concentrated, and many of the innovations inaugurated by Peter the Great, and since modified or promoted by intervening sovereigns, were advanced a long way towards their consummation. The commercial, industrial, and intellectual progress of Russia gained much from her long reign: the power of the Church was further diminished by

confiscations of its property ; works of philanthropy were undertaken ; the administration of justice was improved ; but it was no more given to her to extract a code of law out of the legal confusion of her realm, than to extirpate the corruption which infested every branch of the imperial service. Most noticeable, perhaps, was her agency in civilising the nobility. Peter III. had, in a manner, emancipated the nobles after they had been made allodial owners of their fiefs by Anne ; Catherine not only tried to bring them again under discipline, but insisted that they should cultivate Western habits. It was during her reign that the social usages and culture of civilised Europe, which had been seeking admittance for the last century, finally established themselves at the Russian court, and their domicile on the Neva grew into a fine and well-built town. The results of this exotic cultivation were at first naturally superficial, and in many respects long remained so. They have, moreover, greatly tended to exaggerate the distance between the noble caste and the common people, and have thus helped to produce that estrangement of classes which has sadly hampered the good influence of educated persons, and narrowly limited the range of education itself. But the downfall of Muscovite barbarism, and the acceptance of a more generous and universal civilisation in the upper stratum of Russian society, was an indispensable condition for the imposing entrance into the politics of Europe which Russia made at the beginning of the next century, under the guidance of Catherine's mobile grandson.

Thus far reforming absolutism flowed directly from the main depositaries of monarchical power. Autocrats themselves planned and wrought, using agents only as instruments to the ends which they themselves conceived. But it was impossible for the most powerful monarchs alone to profit by the lessons of the progressive movement when the advanced party held the ear of the public and compelled it to hearken to the new doctrines. That other rulers of less degree should participate in the general diffusion of reforming energy, and play in their more limited spheres similar parts, was clearly inevitable. Accordingly, alongside of the great monarchs, we find the inferior sovereigns, and the administrators of delegated power, taking an active share in the work of national redemption.

The overthrow of the Jesuits, that deed which moved Europe more deeply than any other event before the Revolution, was chiefly the work of the minister of one of the most insignificant states of Europe, the remote and feeble Portugal. The circumstance is the more remarkable because, uninfluential as Portugal naturally is by position and resources, it was still less considerable at this time by reason of its backward condition. During the sixty years of Spanish dominion the country had been greatly oppressed and impoverished. Under the first three Braganças its national independence was bartered with its treasure ships to the English for the necessaries of life; its spirit was emasculated by priestly ascendancy; and its industry wasted away before the false wealth of the mines,

the indolence of superstition, and the competition of foreigners. In 1750 John V., the fourth of the dynasty, who was a superstitious and supine imitator of Louis XIV., had left the country poverty-stricken, persecuted by an insolent aristocracy, and in abject allegiance to the Jesuits. The inheritor of this patrimony, Joseph I., was of a sensual, indolent character, in no way qualified to mitigate these calamities. But when the government of the state seemed to be sinking irretrievably into monkish darkness and slothful extravagance, it passed into the hands of a bold, arbitrary reformer, one of the most imposing personages of the century, Sebastian X Joseph de Carvalho e Mello, celebrated as the Marquis of Pombal.

Carvalho had been imbued with the new political doctrines by study and by an extensive acquaintance with the life of the leading European states. The opportunity to carry his ideas into practice was given him by the queen-mother ; but to his own powerful character was due the vast predominance which he obtained in the conduct of the government. By his personal weight he made the king blindly subservient to his will, ousted the Jesuits from political influence, and spread terror through the corrupt and parasitic nobility. One incident graphically illustrates the nature of his supremacy. On the occasion of the great earthquake in 1755, amid the inundations, ruin, and conflagration to which Lisbon was abandoned, he alone confronted the awful catastrophe with unshaken spirit. Then, in truth, he showed himself the man, whom, "si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinæ."

At once dauntless and solicitous,\* he repressed the general panic, and persuaded the terrified survivors to attend to the wants of the injured and to take sanitary precautions against the consequences of the fearful slaughter, while he himself improvised shelter for the roofless, distributed food to the out-cast, restored order among the disorganised population, and overawed the depredators who swarmed from the prisons and dens of the town to prey upon the citizens in the sudden confusion. Ultimately through his efforts a finer, richer, and healthier Lisbon was erected on the ashes of the old.

Established in his supreme position, Pombal applied himself with unexampled energy to the work of fortifying the independence and developing the resources of his country. He found it destitute of money, defensive power, and industry; he left it at the end of a ministry, lasting a quarter of a century, with full coffers, with a militia which had proved its worth by honourable and successful service under foreign officers of experience, and with improved agriculture, new and revived industries, and a flourishing trade. He had the satisfaction of freeing his country from dependence on the foreigner for necessities, without diminishing the influx of treasure from America, and of making Portugal respected abroad without cringing to an ally for protection. To no work did he devote himself with greater ardour

\* Pombal's reply to the lamentations of the trembling king on this occasion is well known. When asked what was to be done under this infliction of Divine justice he answered, "Bury the dead and attend to the living" (*enterrar os mortos, e cuidar nos vivos*).—Smith, *Memoirs of the Marquis of Pombal*, i. 92.

than to the task of replacing the educational system of his defeated foes, the Jesuits. At his hands both elementary and higher education gained extension, and received a powerful impulse in the direction of science and mental freedom. Naturally, too, he could not neglect the claims of justice to reorganisation; while his vigorous police measures restored security and order, the want of which had become notorious. When his king died, however, the aged minister was disgraced, and persecuted with false accusations by the many and powerful enemies he had made in the course of his uncompromising career; and so weak and diseased were the minds of the queen and her husband that a reactionary *régime* almost wrecked the work of his arduous life.

That Pombal, with his impatient arbitrary temperament contending against torpor, abuse, and corruption, should be harsh even to tyranny was inevitable. To the Jesuits he dealt out the strongest measure of his rigour. The fathers bitterly hated him as their godless supplanter in the government, they provoked him by attributing the earthquake to his unhallowed policy, and they incited the populace to riot against his decrees. Finally the Company of Jesus exasperated him beyond endurance by stirring up a rebellion among the Indians in Paraguay, when Portugal proceeded to take possession of certain provinces which Spain had transferred to it in pursuance of an exchange agreed upon by the two governments. Under the sovereignty of Spain the fathers had made themselves the virtual masters of these lands; and they did everything in their power, even going

to the extreme of arming and marshalling the Indians under European officers, to withstand the cession of the principality to a government less pliant to their influence than the Court of Madrid.

This was, perhaps, the most audacious act upon which the Jesuits ever ventured ; but with all its hardness it was in only too exact conformity with the general conduct which had come to be characteristic of Loyola's order. They were now in the midst of the most worldly phase of their existence. To their political enterprises they had added extensive commercial undertakings, and to their notoriously flexible casuistry they had fitted very equivocal principles of proselytism. But their fall was near. Though powerful at the courts, and possessed of immense wealth, they had justly incurred the jealousy of the people and the restless hostility of the whole freethinking party. They could retain their power only so long as their political influence was unassociated with disaster, only so long as their patrons remained unmoved by the intellectual forces which were undermining the old order. And just as the courts became permeated with the new ideas, the two Jesuit strongholds at Vienna and Versailles received a severe shock in an unsuccessful conflict with the two great Protestant powers, Prussia and England. But the first state, in which their polity was attacked and their presence prohibited, was one in no way concerned in the Seven Years' War, and by the strange humour of fate was the same whose independence and dynasty they had originally done very much to establish, namely, the realm of the

Braganças. There Pombal's advent to power brought them summary expulsion. Not content with dismissing the fathers from attendance at court, and lodging complaints against the society's mercantile undertakings, he seized on their alleged complicity in an attempt to assassinate the king as a pretext to banish them from the Portuguese dominions. With no regard to their comfort or their future, he pitilessly arrested all members of the order, dangerous and harmless alike, whom he could find in the country, and despatched them to Italy, where they endured considerable hardship before they found accommodation. Then followed a furious conflict with Rome, in the course of which all Portuguese subjects were expelled from the Papal states, and all who owed secular allegiance to the Pope were driven from Portugal; nay, to such heat did the strife run that the masterful minister hesitated not to bend the terrors of the Inquisition to his purpose, and caused a priest, who fanatically opposed him, to be condemned by the Portuguese Tribunal of the Holy Office,\* and to be handed back to the vengeance of the secular arm. Not till Clement XIII. died and Ganganelli assumed the tiara, was a reconciliation effected; and by that time the season for the overthrow of the Company of Jesus was fully come.

In France matters followed much the same course as in Portugal. Bad fortune, added to the hostility of Madame de Pompadour and Choiseul, deprived

\* In Portugal this authority never possessed complete independence, and Pombal had at an early stage in his ministry brought it more under the control of the government.



them of their influence at court ; and an exposure of their regulations in the course of a commercial lawsuit convinced the public that the society must submit to some reform if it were to continue to operate in France without detriment to the civil power. The general of the order, however, replied to a demand for a change in the constitution of the French Jesuits with the well-known answer, "sint ut sunt, aut non sint,"—an answer eloquent for more than one degenerate institution of that time. The suppression of the order duly followed, and finally its members were banished from the country. In Spain, too, the religious but despotic Charles III. was led to regard them as menacing to his authority ; and on their exciting seditious disturbances against the reforms of his minister Squilace, they were sent off under circumstances still more cruel than those which had attended their banishment from Portugal. A like fate overtook them in Parma and Naples, and they even lost the protection of Maria Theresa. Only in the dominions of the heretical king of Prussia and in orthodox Russia did they find protection, for Frederick was well pleased to use them as schoolmasters when their power was broken, and Catherine gladly seized another means of influence in Catholic Poland. Further, the Bourbon courts united in a threatening remonstrance to the Pope when he hazarded reprisals at the expense of the weakly Parma ; and the schism continued to embarrass Catholicism till the famous brief abolishing the order was issued in the pontificate of Clement XIV.

The man to whom is attributed the principal

part in inducing Clement to proceed to this extremity was the Spanish ambassador Moñino, afterwards known as the Count of Floridablanca. And his conduct on this occasion was a token of more than a passing motive in the diplomacy of Spain at Rome. It was indeed the expression of a change in the national policy at Madrid. Floridablanca was one of several who at this time strove to restore life to the Spanish monarchy, and to bring the country more on a level with the rest of Europe.

With the establishment of the Bourbon dynasty, and the introduction of foreign officials and French traditions of the statesmanship of Richelieu and Colbert, Spain had made some progress towards recovery from the ruin in which Charles II. had left it. But the predominance of the Church and wars of conquest confined improvement within narrow limits; while the remains of provincial self-government in Castille and Aragon fell a victim to the new system. Nevertheless, the people then received their first introduction to European culture, and their exclusive pride was in a measure disturbed. A period of peace, the reign of the contemptible Ferdinand VI., did much to promote both the recuperative and progressive tendencies. And when the throne was ascended by Charles III., who with the help of Tanucci had spent more than twenty years in applying the principles of enlightened monarchy to his Neapolitan kingdom, the time seemed ripe for authority to realise in a concrete form the progress of which the people had become susceptible, and, if need be, to press

despotically all that was required to complete their advance up to the average standard of European civilisation.

Nor can it be said that Charles III. and his advisers were remiss in their endeavours to fulfil this function, though they lacked the machinery and singleness of purpose necessary to ensure success. The king, notwithstanding his devoutness, was resolved to keep the Church within its proper bounds; he desired to concentrate the national forces in his hands, to purify and strengthen the administration, to preserve public order, encourage industry, and make Spain once more a great power; but he was not born to be a great reformer, and when his contest with the Church had come to a successful conclusion, he fell under the influence of ecclesiastical reaction. Floridablanca represented the principles of extreme absolutism, but in an enlightened and benevolent spirit; and his ministry stands out distinguished among all others in the modern annals of Spain for energy in behalf of the social welfare of the people, though his instrumentality in dealing the last blow at the sunken Cortes commemorates, to his injury, the imperfect philosophy which lay at the base of his political system. Aranda, who was the chief instrument in procuring the expulsion of the Jesuits, vigorously prosecuted the secular policy of the time, and succeeded in removing many hindrances to a better social and intellectual state; but his power in domestic administration did not survive the change in the king's views. To the same end, but in more circumspect manner, worked the plebeian Campomanes, who

comprehended and expressed with singular clearness the great idea of steady, consequent, national development,—an idea of wise patriotism and mature statesmanship far in advance of the age, and, under existing conditions, more calculated to assure the disheartened than to guide the sanguine. But to none of these was granted power to rouse a degenerate and priest-ridden people to live only for its better self, and to mount by painful effort the arduous steep of retarded civilisation. Monarchy could not at once undo all that it had done to encourage the vices of this stiffnecked race. Notwithstanding the fanatical loyalty of his subjects, Charles failed to secure implicit obedience to his prudent mandates of reform; while the more vigorous policy of his ministers was thwarted by the opposition of the clergy and the national inertia. Nevertheless this reign brought the country to the verge of social reform as it had tentatively introduced it to political progress. At its close a well-founded hope in the nation's power of spontaneous advance was attained. But the new reign and the great European convulsion dashed all these hopes to the ground. Years afterward Spain had to begin anew, and under pitiable disadvantages, that work of self-redemption which is still in progress, and whose crude and chequered course has caused the reign of Charles III., in its true eighteenth century aspect, to be almost entirely disregarded.

No less unfortunate was the fate of Charles's reign in Naples, though his attempts to civilise the country and to develop its resources were rewarded with some measure of success, and were meri-

toriously extended by Tanucci, whom he left at the head of the regency during the minority of his son Ferdinand IV. Something of value was gained. The barons at least were enticed by the attractions of the court from exercising an armed tyranny over the provinces, and some of their most invidious prerogatives were abolished; limits were set to the power and wealth of the priesthood, the Papal ordinances were made subordinate to the royal approval, and the administration of justice was in part reformed; the interests of commerce were attended to, and many useful public works were executed; but no portion of the time's enlightened principles gained permanent adoption in the government, whose new experience of a ruler's care was soon exchanged for the worst tyranny of Bourbon misrule.

Yet Italy was not without a part in the new movement. In Naples appeared one of the earliest attacks on the political power of the Church in favour of the absolute sovereignty of the State. This was the book of Giannone, whose influence throughout the Peninsula was of very considerable practical importance in determining the insubordinate attitude of different states towards the Papal power. Several other notable works of liberal meaning might be enumerated which were produced by Italy in the age when men like Beccaria, Vico, Genovesi, and Filangieri thought and wrote. In truth, if the Italians showed themselves ready to receive the ideas of France, it was only because they had diligently prepared themselves for the lessons of the gospel of progress. Nor did the

governments remain indifferent to what was going on around them. In Tuscany, under the Grand Duke Leopold, the anomalous distinctions which separated the constituent portions of the duchy were removed by introducing uniformity of justice, taxation, customs, and administration. A more national and less sacerdotal character was given to the accepted Catholicism. The agrarian system was amended, and the privileges of the nobles were curtailed; drainage works and like improvements were undertaken; and monopolies were subordinated to the public interest. But to all this was not wanting that foil which in some shape or other ever accompanied the benevolent action of the reforming sovereigns. Leopold was intent upon doing everything for his people in a paternal manner, and he was thus led to develop the old system of espionage into the police engine, which has been the most vexatious heritage bequeathed to the Italians of this century. Nor did that part of Italy which was immediately under Austrian dominion escape the hand of reform, and even the Papal states had a Pius VI.: only in the aristocratic republics did the new tidings pass unheeded.

Somewhat grim and gloomy was the form which the increased activity of government assumed in the dominions of the house of Savoy. In this respect, as in so many others, the military monarchy which was destined to conduct the contest for Italian independence and unity, resembled that larger soldier-state which fought the battle of German freedom and consolidation. Victor Amadeus II., the founder of the kingdom, was not inferior to the

Hohenzollerns in his efforts to strengthen his state by educating the people, and slackening the bonds of superstition; and his son, Charles Emanuel III. (1730—1773), though his despotism brought ruin to all that remained of constitutional freedom, followed a like policy, and further centralised the administration and reformed the feudal tenures. But in both reigns the difficulties of self-preservation necessitated the maintenance of a burdensome military force, and favoured feudal subordination of classes.

In the reign of Victor Amadeus III. (1773-1796) this aspect of military monarchy became still more prominent. Self-defence being his chief concern, the king sought to make the Piedmontese army like the highly-wrought model of Prussia. Thus he burdened his small state with exactions which it could ill sustain; and he followed the pattern system so closely that the exclusiveness and arrogance of the nobility, stronger here than anywhere else in Italy, was encouraged in the same pernicious manner as in Prussia, to the detriment of the burgher class, and the loss of ability in the army itself. But in both countries habitual subordination of classes to one another and to the royal service was the essential condition which enabled the sovereigns to overcome the difficulties that were strewn around their nationalising mission; and, though attended by many unpleasing social consequences, they were productive of virtues which helped the people to support the trials which they encountered as champions of the freedom and brotherhood of their kin.

In the Scandinavian states the tendencies and vicissitudes of European state-life of the monarchico-feudal period received peculiarly clear illustration. Here prevailed later, perhaps, than anywhere except in Poland the worst evils which the feudal order left in the way of monarchy; and here the remedy was applied most directly and palpably. Here the crown engaged at closest quarters with the nobility in behalf of its own power and the liberty of the people; here it became most suddenly supreme, and founded the most absolute government where had recently existed the most fettered of monarchies. In open day the position of the nobles was subverted and the sovereigns were entrusted with the sole charge of the people's interests. In these countries was epitomised the defeudalising process which dragged out to such tedious length in the greater part of Europe; and at their courts appeared in quick succession the vices which beset the absolute *régime*.

In Denmark the transition from the feudal to the monarchical order was summed up in a single crisis and effected by a bloodless revolution. Till then the king had practically been elected by the noble families, and his functions had been shamefully restricted and perverted by the stipulations to which the oligarchy habitually forced him to assent. Conversely, the nobility had enjoyed the most extravagant rights, privileges, and immunities; they had held in their hands the chief control of the government without bearing a fair share of its burdens; and they had evaded much of the military service to which they were properly liable.



The Reformation, elsewhere so conducive to the strengthening of civil government, had only increased their power to enslave the people and rob the state. By hard fortune from without, these abuses were brought to a speedy termination. After experiencing a severe reverse in the Thirty Years' War, Denmark came into continual and disastrous collision with Sweden, which had sprung suddenly into the most influential position in northern affairs. Twice was Copenhagen beleaguered; twice was it saved from capture by the devotion of its king, Frederick III., and the valour of its citizens. On the conclusion of peace it was evident that some extraordinary effort was necessary to save the state from ruin; and in September 1660 a parliamentary assembly, consisting of representatives of the nobles, clergy, and burghers, met at Copenhagen to consider the means to be employed. The peasantry, whose right to be represented in the parliament was indefeasible, had been brought too low by the nobility to put in an appearance, and it devolved on the burghers and clergy to defend the nation from the cupidity of the privileged classes. The refusal of the last to subject themselves to the operation of a general excise tax occasioned a coalition of the ecclesiastics and citizens against the valuable monopoly, which the nobles had come to enjoy, of renting the crown lands at a nominal rate. The contest thus excited soon resolved itself into an agitation for the conversion of the elective sovereignty into a hereditary monarchy.

From the first the nobles were overpowered by

their antagonists. They were unable to preserve any of the conditions they had imposed upon the crown ; nay, they were compelled to acquiesce in a total surrender to the king of the work of forming a new constitution. Nobles, clergy, burghers, and peasants alike empowered the king to found a throne, heritable by both male and female descendants, according to the pattern which he thought best suited to the country and the existing institutions. And Frederick III., with his advisers, proved himself not unworthy of the responsibility. Under his auspices the radical change of constitution was introduced and completed without faltering and without excess. The nobles' monopoly of office was abolished, and government colleges with a council of state were instituted, to which admittance was given to the burgher class. The management of the demesne lands was resumed by the crown without undue harshness ; the support of the state was declared equally obligatory upon all ; assent to the revolution was demanded and received from all the provincial assemblies in Denmark and Norway, and a deliberative voice in important matters was promised in the future to the nation's representatives. The task of restoring liberty to the peasants, who had been improperly reduced to serfage by unscrupulous alienation of the crown lands, was undertaken with prudence, and the positions of the clergy and the burghers were made more independent.

Thus monarchy, with all mildness and caution, purged Denmark in a few years of the worst feudal evils, which in most other countries had partly been

extirpated by a protracted contest, and partly were still lingering under the protection of the crown. And the newly-created monarchy was equally prompt to assume the manners and semblance of European royalty. Frederick's successor, Christian V., with his minister Greifenfeldt, lost no time in clothing the throne with the splendour belonging to absolute power, and in surrounding it with a regularly graduated order of nobility. He modelled his court after that of Louis XIV., and introduced the titles and immunities of rank at the cost of the liberties of the people; while the aristocracy, whose fathers had regarded themselves as the victims of a tyrannical revolution, accepted the compromise, and readily sought gratification in the vacuities and distinctions of a court life. Yet further went Frederick IV., who reigned during the first thirty years of the eighteenth century. Along with an increased exercise of his prerogative, which sometimes involved the country in unnecessary troubles, and the maintenance of a heightened magnificence, this king manifested a true zeal for progress and enlightenment like the rest of the more advanced politicians of the time. Measures were taken in favour of the serfs, education received attention for the first time, the administration and finances were managed with success, industry was encouraged, and the interests of commerce regarded. In the next reign, however, the reign of Christian VI., monarchy betrayed a less attractive aspect. Severe pietism quenched such gladness as a court life could bring; puritanical hypocrisy became the fashionable demeanour; devoutness was rendered

obligatory by law ; freedom of thought was strictly suppressed. The whole mass of the Danish people was ranged in order of subordination, and the subservience of every class to its superior was strictly upheld. The government became a morose kind of despotism, suspended like a black cloud over the face of the country. Upon the peasantry it cast its darkest shadow. As in so many other lands, they fell victims to military service, while they were again bound to the soil, and again surrendered into the power of their lords. On the other hand, patronage was extended to lifeless learning, and a pacific policy shielded the country from many a hardship.

With a change of monarch the prospect lightened. Whereas Christian VI. had secluded himself from his subjects and had even disowned their language, his son Frederick V. took pleasure in being a Dane among Danes, and strove by personal intercourse to gain their affection. He banished the bigot gloom and restored the lawfulness of amusement. Possessed with a catholic love for literature, art, and science, he welcomed into Denmark the new culture at the same time that he fostered indigenious talent. And this he did without neglecting the more serious duties of government. Assisted by the elder Bernstorff and other able ministers, he made his reign as memorable for industrial progress as for intellectual life ; he guarded the state from war ; and, though he made no direct effort to emancipate the serfs, but rather increased their burdens, yet under him came into vogue healthier social views, which led to some spontaneous libera-

tion of the peasantry in imitation of the example set by his great adviser. Unfortunately this generous *régime* proved too expensive for the little state in times when army and fleet demanded large outlays; and Frederick's reign left the country in debt, and the people burdened with a weight of ill-considered taxation. His successor, Christian VII., fell into imbecility through leading a dissolute life, and gave himself up to the influence of Struensee, a German physician, who, with the queen, a quick-witted joyous daughter of England, came to be the real ruler of the country. Struensee used his power for the advancement of the state along the path of reform; striking with the directness and indiscretion of an entire stranger, and following the current liberal ideas without any statesmanlike views for their special application; but he was not a man of Pombal's calibre, and he opposed a feeble resistance to the general reaction against foreign influence, while he continually provoked animosity by trenching on established interests. He succumbed to the plots of his enemies and the treachery of the king's stepmother, and involved in his disgrace the imprudent queen. His cruel fate, with that of his associate Brandt (1772), closes the history of Denmark in the eighteenth century. The useless king passed into the hands of a party determined to cancel the reforms of Struensee, and to restore as far as possible the old order in favour of the nobility. Not till 1784, when the Crown Prince assumed the regency, was the retrograde movement brought to an end. Then, under another Bernstorff, the good offices of monarchy were

again manifested. The peasantry were emancipated from their servitude to the soil, and from forced labour; they were converted into proprietors, and their trade in agricultural products was made free.

Far less summary than the single Danish revolution was the strife by which Sweden attained to true monarchical government. From the beginning the kingdom of the Vasas was reft by antagonism between the power of the crown and the ambition of the nobles, but in this connection we can only advert to the final act which established for good the supremacy of the sovereign. This happened as late as the reign of Gustavus III., and, though thus long postponed, the event was the decisive turning-point in Sweden's modern history. The rule of the Swedish aristocracy was one of the worst examples of its evil kind. After the death of Gustavus Adolphus the noble families, favoured by the caprices of his extraordinary daughter, by the turmoil of war, and by the minority of Charles XI., had obtained a great preponderance in the state, which they extravagantly employed to their illicit profit and aggrandisement. But their power was well-nigh brought to the ground by Charles when he arrived at his majority. Almost savagely did this resolute monarch grind down the nobles in his efforts to strengthen the crown and reclaim for the state its proper resources. On the decease of Charles XII., however, they regained all their power by forcing Ulrica Eleanor to consent to constitutional changes, which threw the government entirely into their own hands. The crown became little more than a cloak for the selfish, traitorous,

and disastrous administration of an unprincipled oligarchy. Not content with preying directly upon their countrymen, they sold themselves to foreign monarchs, and, dissatisfied with a conventional price, they imparted to their bargains the briskness of competition by forming two factions pledged to betray their country respectively to France and Russia.

This disgraceful chapter in Swedish history was prolonged through the reign of Frederick Adolphus, till an end was put to the enormities of the nobles by Gustavus III. This young king had witnessed in his father's reign the extremities to which the aristocratic factions could reduce the nation, and he would gladly have seen a more spirited resistance to their baneful influence than the constitutional opposition which his mild-tempered father was reluctantly driven to make. He was energetic and arbitrary in temperament ; he was convinced of the monarchical principles of the century, and desirous of fulfilling the highest functions belonging to kings ; and he was, moreover, as cautious and dissimulating in the formation of his plans as he was bold in their execution. Confident of the support of the people, and peculiarly gifted with qualities for obtaining popularity, he waited long enough to become secure of his position, and then, by a well-contrived *coup a'état*, overthrew the oligarchical government, and procured, with the help of a display of military force, the ratification of a constitution which gave to the crown almost absolute power. For a considerable time Gustavus discharged the duties thus incurred without infringing the limits of his authority, and his reign brought to the

Swedes many of the benefits of the time's enlightened statecraft. But, like so many other of his contemporaries, he fell into extravagances very incommensurate with the resources of his country, and gradually forfeited much of his popularity by the imposition of vexatious taxes. His hold upon the people was further weakened by indulgence in certain whimsical regulations, for which he betrayed a taste as he grew older; and he placed a very damaging strain on his authority by embarking on a bootless war with Russia in complete disregard of the constitutional conditions prescribed for such a step. The discontent thus provoked drove him to resort to another *coup d'état*, which left him a perfectly absolute king, and deprived the nobles of their chief remaining privileges; but it did not prevent him from continuing to pursue the imprudent course upon which he had entered. His project of engaging in war with the French revolutionary government brought matters to a climax. This time it was the nobles who dealt the blow. Gustavus had neglected to conciliate the order as sound policy dictated, and he had of necessity increased its disaffection by injuring its interests in his efforts to improve the condition of the people; he also kept it in fear of another assault on its position; while his chivalrous crazes and warlike enterprises opened up an indefinite prospect of troubles for the state. A conspiracy was formed against him, and he was shot at a masked ball. He was succeeded by his son, in whom his better qualities were absent and his eccentricities and rashness exaggerated; and thus it came about that the crown which he



had vested with supreme power passed in the end to a French adventurer and his family. But neither did the old evils return, nor did the Swedes require again to fortify the foundations of monarchy before adopting a more balanced system of government.

To confirm the lesson afforded by the history of the Scandinavian states, only a converse example was required. If events in Sweden and Denmark demonstrated with distinctness the nature of that combat which lent relevance to the existence of monarchical institutions, an instance of the calamities resulting from the non-intervention of a powerful crown at the proper juncture in the life of a state was alone necessary to corroborate the natural conclusion that kings were in their time very valuable functionaries. And it happened that when Sweden was extricated from the toils of a traitorous oligarchy by submitting to the high-handed rule of a single man, there came to pass the most awful catastrophe which in modern history has overtaken a nation in revenge for obstinate persistence in systematic anarchy. Then occurred in Poland the *reductio ad absurdum* of aristocratic insubordination and turbulence. To assure Polish independence in the presence of vigorous and encroaching neighbours, it was imperative to maintain a sound social organisation, and to concentrate the country's resources in the hands of a political superior. But here the magnates of the community were most powerful, unrestrained, and self-seeking; here the life of the peasantry most nearly approached brute existence; here swarms of inferior nobles filled the retinues of the magnates and lived upon

the society without contributing anything to the common stock; and here, in consequence, there was no room for free and honourable industry. The only bond of union in the land was an intolerant Catholicism. The crown was merely an inflammatory fiction, an apple of discord; the aristocratic republican assemblies were but gatherings of strife and disorder. The electiveness of the monarchy, the disabilities imposed on every king at his election, the "liberum veto," \* and the right of armed confederation, were the never-failing sources of disorganisation and tumult. While other countries had been preparing themselves to enter upon the modern stage of European social development, the realm of the Piasts had been sinking deeper and deeper into the extremes of serfage and baronial licence. No social virtue remained to counteract the demoralising subservience to foreign dictation which was now a matter of common occurrence. Here was wanting every constituent of true patriotism. Here was absent or perverted every influence which usually strengthens and protects the lives of nations. The very valour of the Poles was spent on wild civil conflicts; their talents stood them in best stead for intrigue; their love of freedom vented itself in lawless individualism: nothing in them conformed to the laws of sound existence.

\* Or power of a single dissident to veto the resolutions of the Diet. The custom originated when it was usual to settle differences by combat on the spot; and its obstructive effects did not appear fully till the Diet ceased to appeal from a division to immediate trial by battle.

And this rule of the abnormal vitiated even their participation in the time's enlightenment. True, the party, to whom experience and instruction from abroad had suggested fundamental reform, was so far in harmony with the regular conditions of things as to single out, for the first step towards improvement, the conversion of the elective sovereignty, with its brawls, intrigues, and debility, into a stable hereditary monarchy. But it stultified this aspiration by relying on the most fatal of all means for the achievement of the change, to wit, the help of Russia; while its opponents, who desired the maintenance, or rather systematisation, of oligarchical rule,\* were able to call themselves patriots in virtue of their hostility to Muscovite interference. On the death of Augustus III., the Saxon King of Poland, an opportunity for starting on a new and better course presented itself. The misguided reform party, however, appealed to Catherine II. for help to enable it to place on the throne one of its own candidates. She readily accepted an invitation to meddle with the affairs of the distracted state, but was careful not to permit any innovations calculated to remove its manifold and dangerous ills. She provided the men and money necessary to secure an unanimous election on the field of Vola, but insisted on nominating to the throne one of her old lovers, the weak and irresolute Stanislaus

\* A more favourable interpretation of their conduct attributes their anti-monarchical policy to a determination to prevent the influence of the crown from becoming despotic in the absence of the "liberum veto," the abolition of which they regarded and desired as the first condition of better government. See Von Moltke's essay on Poland.

Poniatowski, in preference to a member of the powerful family of the Czartoriskis, who were the chiefs of the party and commanded its suffrages. At the same time, under the guise of protector of Poland's constitution and liberty, she prohibited all attempts to abolish the main causes of anarchy—a perfidious policy, in which she was countenanced by Austria, and abetted by Prussia. One exception was made to the maintenance of the old state of things, an exception truly in appearance agreeable to liberal principles, but not the less designedly provocative of disturbance. This was the extension of toleration to those who did not belong to the Catholic Church.\* To the passions excited by a contested succession were thus added those of religious fanaticism, and Poland was finally reduced to a condition of impotent confusion. Violence and guile from without completed the work for which dissension and anarchy had long prepared within. The time was come for the fulfilment of John Casimir's prophecy ; the scheme often broached in secret was now openly realised. The three neighbouring monarchies stepped in and seized portions of the Polish territory. A few years passed, and the Poles made a movement towards the regeneration of their state after the same hasty fashion which the French were then following in their revolution. But they were as unable to extricate themselves from the snares of their enemies as from their own follies and vices. In the name of order their reforming efforts were nullified ; and the

\* It also elicited a fulsome compliment to Catherine from Voltaire.

second partition of the country took place. A little longer, and the kingdom of the Jagellons was entirely incorporated into the three military monarchies of Eastern Europe.

Even in our own country the cause of reform was not altogether dissociated from the action of monarchy and individual greatness.

Notwithstanding the unique character of British constitutional progress, the political condition of England in the middle of the eighteenth century bore a certain degree of resemblance to that of continental states of the same period. In both cases a powerful aristocracy exercised great influence on society and the management of public affairs. In both cases, too, considerable evils were experienced through the corrupt practices and lax morality which infected to a more or less extent all the upper classes of Europe at this time. But as the part borne by the English aristocracy in the struggles for British constitutional freedom differed from that which fell to the feudal lords of the continent in the rise of the monarchies, so the noble class, which found itself supreme in England after the Revolution of 1688, differed from the lords abroad who sought to compensate themselves for their loss of independence by becoming sleek favourites at court and burdensome charges on the people. Yet, as it was not unsullied by the faults of the continental noblesse, it was also to feel the chastening hand of monarchy; nor was it to emerge from the discipline without undergoing very considerable changes.

During the reigns of the two first Georges the

aristocratic element in the government of England became paramount. The indifference of the sovereigns to English politics, the full recognition of ministerial responsibility, and the systematic control of most constituencies by the government and the great families, conspired to add to the natural power of the aristocracy the authority of the royal prerogative and the force of parliamentary sanction. But this was at the cost of purity of conduct and fairness of representation. The exercise of power was confined to one party; and long prosperity wrought its usual effects on an oligarchy. The Whigs had rightly become supreme in the state, and on the whole they adhered to the principles which had given them their position; but their cohesion in the absence of external pressure soon came to depend on a system of management by their leaders which exceeded all bounds of probity and all conditions of national trust. By open bribery, by a shameless multiplication of sinecures, pensions, and offices, the Whigs continued to retain their supremacy under the forms of parliamentary government; while all genuine political conflict fell into abeyance. On the fall of Walpole, however, their unity broke up into personal and family rivalries. At the same time their opponents had gathered strength by the alienations due to Walpole's passion for power. During this juncture factious motives alone governed the actions and vicissitudes of parties; and the distinctive characteristics of Whig and Tory were temporarily obscured in an undignified competition for place and preferment. But none the less did the two

main ideas of the British constitution continue to exist, though the dispersion of Jacobite hopes had somewhat altered the terms of the Tory principle. The Whigs were still the protectors of the authority of parliament, venal though that parliament had become: their antagonists still upheld the prerogative of the king, though the sovereign was a Hanoverian who gladly delegated his rights to his ministers. Thus the situation presented two questions of interest. Would faction be again subordinated to party, and if so, would the crown or the aristocracy gain weight by the change?

A third alternative, however, was conceivable. The consummate quietism of Walpole's policy had favoured the growth of national wealth, and the time had come when the middle classes were about to bring riches into competition with the territorial influence of the aristocracy. The gradual diffusion of affluence was also reviving in the people a disposition to take a part in political affairs; and a true public spirit was superseding the religious partisanship of the civil war. Yet the House of Commons was no longer the representative of the people, nor were its proceedings open to the public. Composed in great part of deputies from places either long fallen into decay or once designedly enfranchised on account of pliant insignificance, it chiefly reflected the views of those who were able to dictate to servile constituencies; and it was governed by him who was most skilful in the arts of corruption. No responsibility to the people checked its actions; and the imperious temper of the assembly often betrayed it into illegal and

tyrannical proceedings. On the most favourable estimate, the parliament of this period can only be considered as the organ of a trusted oligarchy. As the century wore on, this divergence of the government from the people threatened to produce serious discontent, and more than one incident manifested the inclination of the masses to remonstrate very roughly with their rulers. But by one path the body of the people had already begun to gain access to the counsels of parliament. When seats were recognised as marketable commodities, those who had amassed wealth in manufactures and commerce were able to bid effectively for a place in the House of Commons, and thus members for the unrepresented classes forced a way into parliament unconstrained by obligations to scheming nominators. This process was, however, very slow: it tended to do no more than add a plutocratic element to aristocracy; and its very tardiness dangerously subjected the character of the wealthy plebeians to the fascinations of rank, and the conservative suasion of royal favours. Hence whatsoever reforms might be expected from the intrusion of the moneyed classes into politics, they were certainly distant, and would probably prove to be tentative.

The actual result did not wholly correspond with any one of these possibilities; and the first event to remove from parliamentary government the dishonour, which had fallen upon it in the classic land of its adoption, was one much more in agreement with the main tendency of the age. This was no other than the appearance from among the wealthy—



commoners of a great and commanding character, who hushed the mean squabbings of faction by the impassioned utterances of fervid patriotism, who put to shame sordid strife for lucre and position by personal indifference to dignities and emoluments, and who vehemently strove to breathe into the nation and its rulers a lofty singleness of purpose, and to found government on the confidence of the people. The efforts of the elder Pitt brought to England a splendid meed of military glory; but incomparably more memorable were the purer and nobler conceptions of political life which render him pre-eminent among the statesmen of the century. His example, precepts, and legislation were to England what reforming monarchy was to contemporaneous Europe. He first raised that protest against oligarchical rule, which ultimately issued in a radical reform of the Commons; he first vindicated the true principles of representative government in the face of an obdurate parliament; he first among statesmen hailed the birth of the great American Republic with eloquent traditions of British constitutional freedom; he first discerned the awakening political capacity of the English people, and promoted that national life which has since distinguished it among the nations. Before his time opposition to the vices of the government had been but the artifice of those worsted in their use. To his generous and statesmanlike views must primarily be traced the greater part of the improvements which have since been incorporated into the English constitution.

But while it was England's privilege to receive

these lessons of the time through the person of William Pitt, it was also its misfortune to be afflicted with a sovereign, who represented in a limited sense the wilfulness of the continental type of monarchy, and invaded with disastrous effects the spirit and forms of the polity established by the Revolution. George III. ascended the throne at a crisis which demanded the most sincere and adroit exercise of the royal prerogative in behalf of sound constitutional government. To the neglect and abuse of the powers of the crown had chiefly been owing the degradation of the parliamentary system ; by their judicious application it seemed that the sources of evil might be stopped, and the national policy of Pitt imposed upon the ruling classes. Now the new king was in many respects qualified to contend with the evils from which England suffered. He set a conspicuous example of purity and simplicity in living ; he possessed a strong feeling of duty, and a will so firm that under the influence of temper it degenerated into immovable obstinacy ; he was courageous, kind-hearted, and hard-working ; he was clear-sighted so far as his vision extended ; and he came to the throne glorying in the name of Briton. Nevertheless, his reign, viewed with regard to the action of the crown, is the record of a long series of deplorable failures and reprehensible misdeeds.

By education, associates, and character George III. was determined to follow the injunctions of his mother—to be a king of the despotic German pattern ; by circumstances he was given a pretext to assume this part in the guise of the monarch

described by Bolingbroke as a patriot king. His professed policy, therefore, was to exalt the royal prerogative to the discomfiture of faction, the removal of corruption, and the greater efficiency of government. But in practice these fair professions suffered woeful perversion. The royal prerogative, wielded without a proper sense of its nature and without regard for its limits, became a foe to all political life; the downfall of faction was compassed only by the formation of a king's party more venal and servile than any aristocratic coterie; bribery, so far from being suppressed, was increased by prostitution of the patronage, money, and favours at the command of the crown; while the new system of government consisted simply in the incapable execution of a crooked policy which sprang from the king's prejudices and narrow understanding in conflict with the wants of a vast and advanced empire. The imperious servants of the crown were overthrown by the same arts with which they had ruled. The king hesitated not to bribe and intrigue as they had done in order to attain his purposes; and he strained without scruple his prerogative in his resistance to constitutional control. Aided by the prestige of his position, by his good repute, and the instinctive loyalty of his subjects, he succeeded in emancipating himself almost completely from the restraints of ministerial responsibility; but, on the other hand, he opposed so despotically all popular demands that for a considerable period he wholly alienated the affections of his subjects.

The calamitous consequences of this policy are familiar to everyone, but there is another aspect of

the reign equally deserving of recognition. There is a point of view from which George III. appears as an ally of the people against the aristocratic oligarchy. The resolute self-assertion of the king raised up a new Tory party which was dominated by intense devotion to the reigning sovereign and by reverence for the royal prerogative. The fears aroused by the sight of the French Revolution confirmed it in its monarchical views, filled it with a craven dread of all change, and brought it many additional recruits. The possession of a leader, though hardly a representative, in the younger Pitt, gave it further preponderance ; while in those days of trouble, danger, and arduous warfare, men were naturally inclined to tolerate the control of authority. The Tory party became supreme, and long continued to wield the chief power in the state. Meanwhile a new Whig party had been formed. Overwhelmed in the Upper House by George's servile levies, beaten in the Commons by the immense influence of the king and his friends, doggedly opposed by the clergy in its efforts to recover under such an auspicious *régime* the ground lost in former reigns, the traditional guardians of the acquisitions of the Revolution were forced to seek assistance by appealing to liberal and popular principles. The lower sections of the middle class, and even the lowest orders, thus found representation in the unreformed parliament ; while the upper portion of the industrial world was emboldened by the increasing force of public opinion, by the publication of debates, by the great influence of the press, by the institution of public meetings, and by the

talents of the Whig leaders, to pay less regard to courtly honours and preferment, and to rally round the party to which it was by nature more closely allied than to the supporters of despotism and obscurantism. Hence the revival of monarchical rule in England, which necessarily produced an anomalous deadlock in the government, and occasioned a pause in the political progress of the nation from the baneful effects of which the present generation still suffers, was not altogether void of the general results achieved by absolutism in the century. By the power of the crown the factious rule of aristocracy was crushed, and the traditional upholders of freedom were forced to espouse the cause of popular liberty; but the time was past when an independent exercise of the royal authority could endure, and the day had arrived when every movement in behalf of the people was a sure and permanent advance.

In France alone, amid a host of evils, absolute monarchy did nothing to earn respect or gratitude. When in other states it was playing a great national rôle, here, where it had reached its earliest and most imposing development, it became an object of contempt and disgust. Immediately after the death of Louis XIV. followed a reaction against the gloomy despotism of his later years. A regency was formed in defiance of the dead king's will; the nobles thrust themselves into affairs of state; and frivolity and debauchery stalked forth in shameless unconstraint. And when the sovereign was declared of age, the monarchy regained none of its earlier consideration. Government passed into the hands

of the royal mistresses, and though the people were at first slow to recognise the degeneracy into which the crown had fallen, Louis, once the well-beloved, steadily sank in the regard of the nation till he became to it no more than a burdensome sensualist. Meanwhile trouble thickened about the throne. The distress, which the heartless ambition of Louis XIV. had brought upon the people, had never been overcome, and it continually reappeared in more acute forms. Not that France made no progress in industry and trade; but so pernicious was its economical organisation that never were the labouring poor able to free themselves from grinding penury. The insensate and profligate court, nevertheless, made increasing demands for the means to gratify its depraved tastes and bootless ambition. Nor were the supports of the throne sounder than the throne itself. The royal policy of attracting the nobility to the court had worked its most disastrous effects. The old families were generally ruined in purse and demoralised in character. The middle classes, who should have given a certain degree of stability to the social structure, had either lost their sober loyalty by purchasing titles, offices, and privileges, and assuming the false position of a mushroom aristocracy, or they were filled with resentment at supercilious treatment, and with anxiety for the safety of their debts. The Church, too, could lend no aid to the king, devout though he was in the midst of his depravity. It had lost its authority over the minds of the people, it shared the general disinclination to offer pecuniary aid, and offered no better resistance to the impending

storm than a vigorous persecution of the writers who disseminated the doctrines ultimately subversive of Church and State together.

When Louis XV. died, hope if not confidence was restored to the throne. His grandson was free from vices, and disposed to take interest in the welfare of the nation. But unfortunately Louis XVI. was without firmness of character or consistency of purpose; he was unacquainted with the state of the country which he was called to rule, and was incapable of conceiving or applying the remedies which it needed: even at the most critical moments he was unable to act with determination, or to realise that matters of state were more urgent than the pleasures of the chase. He allowed his frivolous queen and wayward court to countervail his good intentions, their intrigues to thwart his plans, and the clamours of a mob to shake his confidence in his ministers. He could offer no resistance to the downward course of the monarchy. Passively he was borne along, the luckless victim of its decadence.

But France could not be the only civilised nation whose rulers were heedless of French ideas of reform. Even in the reign of Louis XV., something of the new spirit had found expression in the ruling circles; and more than one capable administrator had fallen in attempts to remove abuses and introduce improvements. But evil had to grow yet stronger before power was given to a man qualified to cope with the great and complex dangers which surrounded the state. Turgot was not entrusted with the ministry of finance till the situation had

become so desperate, that only the most drastic measures could prevent a speedy collapse of the monarchical fabric. Thoroughly instructed by his memorable administration of Limousin in the causes of the state's weakness and the people's misery, Turgot was fully aware of the circumstances under which he entered office; and his attack on the outworn and perverted order was prompted solely by the urgency of the case. No man of his day knew better the strength of traditional institutions, and the intimate connection of the present with the past. "None before him and few after him have described so well how age is bound to age, how generation transmits to generation what it has inherited from the past and won by its own exertions."\* He at any rate is free from the blame so often imputed to unsuccessful reformers, the reproach of hasty, ill-considered innovation. With calm instructed vision he contemplated the evils which afflicted France, and, following the conclusions of the economical school which he adorned, drew up in conjunction with Malesherbes the only possible scheme for saving the country. The plan in its entire form comprised nearly every change which, after years of turmoil, produced modern France. Among the projects of this reforming ministry were provincial self-government, popular education, freedom of the press, and the admission of the burgher class to all public offices; the abolition of the road-corrée, and of guilds, and hindrances to agriculture; the equable distribution of taxation, the liberation of

\* Flint, *Philosophy of History*, p. 110.



trade, and the reorganisation of justice, police, and finance; the commutation of feudal burdens and seignorial rights; reduction of the royal expenditure; disuse of *lettres de cachet*; and through the minister of war, St. Germain, improvement of discipline and the recognition of merit in the army.

There was in truth no reason to discredit the ability of Turgot's ministry to save the state, far on the road to destruction as that state had gone. The means employed would certainly have amounted to a revolution, but they would have been applied with judgment and with prudent consideration for the sacrifices and derangements necessarily involved in such a process. The trite assertion that France was not to be purged by anything short of a consuming fever, is nothing but the commonplace of a careless optimism. To condemn the offending classes as mere mortiferous matter to be destroyed at all costs, is possible only through gross misapprehension of their motives and disposition. The most fortunate members of the old order were not monsters past all reform, and the most pernicious institutions might have been abolished without immolating the individuals whom they harboured. The changes contemplated by Turgot would have rendered needless a series of spasmodic revolutions, following no fixed principle, owning no guides, and submitting to no laws of politics or morality. To execute them, however, was required power to control the influential, the ignorant, and the base.

The power was not available. Though Turgot won the entire approval of the king for his plans of

removing hardship and abuse, and the good Louis was persuaded that only he and his minister cared for the people, the contemplated reforms were hardly commenced when it became evident that the royal authority would shrink from engaging with the furious opposition aroused in all conservative quarters. It is a never-failing consequence of human nature that the most virtuous will offer violent resistance when they believe their interests to be imperilled, even though the change be clearly for the public good ; and the strong arm of the majority or some other political superior is always necessary to compel acquiescence from those who would recoil in their calmer moments from wilful injury to society. But Louis had no sense for the arbitrary element in personal government. He could not comprehend that pure monarchies possess the essential disadvantage of wittingly or unwittingly nurturing anachronisms and abuses, and that to redress the social balance the discretionary power of despotism must occasionally be exercised. He clung too closely to the dictates of domestic morality and the law for private persons to be able to understand that monarchs must sometimes defy the law, ignore individuals, and disregard tumult, if they are to preserve the health of their states. Against Turgot's opinion he consented to the recall of the parliaments, those independent legal bodies equally averse to change and despotism, which had been suppressed in the last reign on account of their refractory attitude towards the king ; and he thus gratuitously afforded constitutional utterance to the remonstrances of threatened interests.

On the decree of the first and most urgent reform, namely, the emancipation of the corn trade from absurd regulations which discouraged the efforts of honest dealers to defend the poor against the variation of harvests, and facilitated the extortion of associated speculators and influential monopolists, he displayed an entire lack of firmness to withstand the uproar which the members of the *pacte de famine* excited by vulgar fallacy and suborning arts. And though he was induced to overcome the resistance of the parliament of Paris to following edicts of great moment by the recognised act of a *lit de justice*, his reluctance to support his ministers in their policy became so embarrassing that it was evident that they soon would have no alternative but resignation. Moreover, Louis became as suspicious of his servants as they of him. While anxious to adopt their suggestions for the purification of the state, he shrank from their schemes for reconstructing it; and Turgot, staunch monarchist though he was, hesitated not to lay before him demands for fundamental changes in the French constitution. That Louis was wrong in supposing that France might be saved by mere amendments is certain; that Turgot, perhaps impatient to sound at once the full depth of the king's confidence, submitted too abruptly a revolutionary project, seems equally clear.\* Possibly further intercourse with one another might have brought king and minister into accord if at this juncture the enmity of the court to the ministry had not culmi-

\* Cf. Oncken, *Das Zeitalter Friedrichs des Grossen*, ii. 616, *et passim*.

nated in a personal intrigue against Turgot and Vergennes. At any rate, the king came to the conclusion that the ministerial policy was dangerous, and that the discontent it aroused was unendurable. Reproached by queen and court for parsimony towards their enjoyments and injustice towards their favourites, summoned by clergy, nobility, and lawyers, to prevent the disturbance of feudal institutions, Louis XVI. made up his mind to discard all heroic measures. Turgot, Malesherbes, and St. Germain were dismissed from his service, and France resumed the road to blind revolution.

Within a few years of Turgot's fall the catastrophe happened. Seldom does the same generation, which wilfully and selfishly obstructs amendment, live to suffer retributive evil; rarely do the members of unyielding classes expiate in their own persons the social ills which they have deliberately made their own. But in this instance a terrible vengeance overtook those who had conspired to defeat timely reform. Nor did this Nemesis confine itself to France. It reached forth over the whole face of Europe, and spared not the realm of the most enlightened monarch. With measured justice the Revolution passed from country to country. Imposed from without or generated from within, it brought to judgment the work of personal governments, and, while visiting their crimes and shortcomings, extended their reforms into a new phase of social progress. The reforming monarchs failed very grievously to exempt their states from incursions of the Revolution. Their work was valuable and their lives notable so far as they

succeeded in anticipating its dispensations; but they were far too vain and corrupt, far too much entangled in feudal evils, far too contemptuous of the people, to forestall the main changes which made Europe modern.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE ADVENT OF THE REVOLUTION.

“ Es erben sich Gesetz' und Rechte  
Wie eine ew'ge Krankheit fort ;  
Sie schleppen von Geschlecht sich zum Geschlechte,  
Und rücken sacht von Ort zu Ort.  
Vernunft wird Unsinn, Wohlthat Plage ;  
Weh dir, dass du ein Enkel bist !  
Vom Rechte, das mit uns geboren ist,  
Von dem ist, leider ! nie die Frage.”

Goethe.

“ We hold these truths to be self-evident :—that all men are created equal ; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights ; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness ; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed ; and whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter and abolish it, and to institute a new government ; laying its foundations on such principles, and organising its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.”—*American Declaration of Independence.*

“ Leicht bei einander wohnen die Gedanken,  
Doch hart im Raume stossen sich die Dinge.”

Schiller.

|| If monarchy in the eighteenth century may be studied as a reformer, no less appropriately may it be treated as a scandal. In France the intense feeling of confidence in the crown was gradually changed by painful experience into utter weariness of its vice and incompetence. Among the minor German potentates prevailed depravity and oppres-

sion only distinguishable from that of Versailles by greater grossness and absurdity; while even at courts, where claims to something better must be allowed, conduct was frequently in vogue which could not but impair love and reverence for the throne. About this period, too, many disputed successions had lowered the royal authority in public estimation. Hence sprang up feelings of hostility against monarchical institutions, feelings which enervated in every breast the sentiments of loyalty, though they preponderated only in the most impatient minds. Along with nobles and ecclesiastics, kings came to be suspected as traitors to the public weal, though much less difficulty was anticipated in converting them back into capable and honourable leaders. As yet the advantages of placing monarchical power on a new footing, by uniting it to a constitution, were understood by few. The services of despotism were too recent and patent for the multitude consciously to contemplate its subversion. The halcyon days of kings were ended, but their remembrance still illumined royalty in the popular imagination.\*

Parallel with this change of feeling occurred a

\* The iconoclasts felt this keenly. "Des préjugés non moins dangereux ont aveuglé les hommes sur leurs gouvernemens. Les nations ne connurent point les vrais fondemens de l'autorité; elles n'osèrent exiger le bonheur de ces Rois, chargés de la leur procurer; elles crurent que les souverains, travestis en Dieux, recevoient en naissant le droit de commander au reste des mortels, pouvoient disposer à leur gré de la félicité des peuples, et n'étoient point comptables des malheureux qu'ils faisoient. Par une suite nécessaire de ces opinions, la politique dégénéra dans l'art fatal de sacrifier la félicité de tous au caprice d'un seul, ou de quelques méchans privilégiés."—*Système de la Nature*, i., p. 339.

similar but independent change in the doctrines of the social theorists, which encouraged the growing disrespect for princes and was in its turn rendered more extreme by monarchy's ill-repute. Though they did not recommend themselves to many citizens till a prospect of self-government presented itself, definite antimonarchical views formed the most important stage in the intellectual movement. They co-existed with a more or less attenuated confidence in personal government, and provided a refuge for those whom reflection or injury had deprived of faith in the wisdom and virtue of kings, till they suddenly obtained general acceptance in a moment of popular excitement. Logically viewed, the change was an easy one. The current sensational philosophy readily transformed itself into materialism and atheism, or in other words, into naturalism of a somewhat low type. From such a creed no hierarchical scheme of society could receive sanction. Gradations of rank were repugnant to its vaunted simplicity, and were dismissed as the inventions of craft and despotism. They obtained no recognition from its crude utilitarian ethics. A fantastic uniformity was attributed to the natural order, and was prescribed for the ideal society. The strictures of rationalism were violently enforced. The Church, the nobles, and the feudal evils were condemned; finally, and in due sequence, kings were denounced as charlatans, impostors, and oppressors. The rule of reason alone was declared legitimate; and by reason was meant obedience within certain limits of social reciprocity to the unsophisticated inclinations



of the individual. At present, said Holbach, "L'état de société est un état de guerre du souverain contre tous, et de chacun des membres les uns contre les autres. L'homme est méchant, non parcequ'il est né méchant, mais parcequ'on le rend tel; les grands, les puissants écrasent impunément les indigents, les malheureux." "Frémissez donc, Rois cruels, qui plongez vos sujets dans la misère et les larmes, qui ravagez les nations, qui changez la terre en un cimetière aride; frémissez des traits de sang sous lesquels l'histoire irritée vous peindra pour les races futures; ni vos monumens somptueux, ni vos victoires imposantes, ni vos armées innombrables n'empêcheront la postérité d'insulter vos mânes odieux; et de venger ses ayeux de vos éclatants forfaits."\*

More subversive than this line of argument were the writings of a man who in many senses was a reactionist. Like the more extreme apostles of enlightenment, J. J. Rousseau glorified the order of nature and vindicated the democratic constitution of society; but he treated with scorn their passionate belief in the beneficent influence of the arts and sciences, he scouted the idea of virtuous and happy progress, he eloquently rebuked the flippant voice of atheism, and he extolled the beauties of an artless life against the artificial existence of civilisation. His ideal natural man was, in fact, simply the primitive savage transfigured. He opposed to the enthusiasm for scientific and social advance a sentimental yearning for return to primæval simplicity. He found the salvation of society not in the false

\* *Système de la Nature* (1775), première partie, pp. 289, 296.

wisdom of the cultured but in the healthy instincts of the unlettered. He awoke among the fine ladies and gentlemen of the rococo time a taste for the charms of humble life and a sense for the first duties of human existence. He placed the nurture and rearing of the young in a new light. With him homely functions and family cares were winning privileges. Under his spell the daily toil of the country grew sweet; labour became dignified, and poverty admirable.

On the other hand, Rousseau furnished a textbook for the democratic party in his *Contrat Social*. He who had formerly inveighed against society as the creature of imposture and fraud, who had declared property to be the source of all social evils and disturbance, came to compose a theory of the social structure in which the rights of property were taken for granted, many possible benefits were asserted of the social state, and all misfortunes were traced to the abnormal character of political institutions. Society, he taught, was founded on a contract between its members, and therefore the sovereign power resided in the people. The sovereignty, moreover, was inalienable, and under all circumstances the people might resume any authority they had delegated, or rebel if the government usurped the supreme power.\* Society, in short,

\* The right of a people to rebel against its rulers, was not unknown among the monarchies of Europe. Till the beginning of the century it was recognised by the King of Hungary in his coronation oath, as a legal proceeding, after the fashion of Poland; and Voltaire had erroneously stated in *Le Siècle de Louis Quinze*, that it had been revived on the accession of Maria Theresa.—*Duc de Broglie, Frederick II., and Maria Theresa*, ii., 29-32.

was a brotherhood, in which all were citizens and equals, acting individually as subjects and collectively as the sovereign. This view of the body politic, proclaimed by the most popular writer of the day, in terse formulæ, and with much show of mathematical precision, opened every mind to the idea of revolution by and for the people, and persuaded of its lawfulness many who were shocked at the tirades of materialist philosophers, or were disinclined to study the speculations of severer thinkers. And to the thought it added a spur to the will. The doctrine of fraternity dealt a mortal blow at the atomism of French society, and redeemed the sense of nationality and citizenship from subjection to the class and individualistic feelings which were at once the basis and danger of the French monarchy. From being the most minutely divided, yet homogeneous, nation, France grew since this time to be the most united and patriotic people of the continent; and its cries for the amelioration of the individual became but variations of a deep-sounding refrain that demanded a rational reconstitution of the State.

For practical politics Rousseau gave little instruction. Excepting approval of a dictatorship, as the cure for inveterate social disorders, and a proposal to banish the members of an unsocial creed, and to punish with death anyone who, having recognised the dogmas of civil religion, acted as if he did not believe them—suggestions which were destined to be to France a very Pandora's box of woes,—no maxims for immediate application were discoverable in his work. One form of government, how-

ever, was distinctly recommended; and this was republican. Indeed a republic of some kind, a republic on a small scale and peculiarly sensitive to popular passions, was the only polity consistent with the inalienable sovereignty of the people. This conclusion eventually produced the most momentous consequences, but at the time of publication, though supported by the general tenor of the current theories, it had to contend with the grave disfavour into which contemporary republican institutions had fallen.

In the first place, though the Polish republic was but a transparent travesty of a commonwealth, its impending wreck lent for the indiscriminating spectator very sinister associations to every polity not founded on a monarchical basis.\* Then Holland, the most glorious champion in civilised Europe of popular right against despotism, seemed to have lost the virtues and forms of a republic, together with the wealth and influence which freedom and energy had bestowed. Driven by adverse fortune in the war of the Austrian succession to invest William IV., Prince of Orange, with the Stadtholderate and the command of the military and naval forces, the Dutch, by making these offices hereditary in the Prince's family, had atoned for the degeneracy of their republic by suffering a kind of monarchical restoration. But

\* The character of the Polish republic was long a source of illusion to the ill-informed. In 1792, one of the Gironde classed the Polish with the English, Anglo-American, Helvetic, and Dutch nations, as the only representatives of freedom with whom the French Republic should deign to make alliances.

they did not succeed in checking the decay of their state. Practically governed by a king, they were hindered from regaining healthy political life through the free, though rough, play of republican forces; while William IV., and the regents during the minority of his son, were incapable of conferring the benefits which a vigorous monarchy, acting according to the spirit of the time, might have secured. Nor did William V. bring a better government; and his reign only intensified the opposition of the mercantile oligarchy to the Stadtholderate, which had been aroused in great measure by the foreign policy of the regents. Patriotism fell a prey to indifference and faction; luxury sapped the civic virtues of the towns; and corruption attacked the administration. Unable to form an efficient and upright government within, or to adopt a national policy without, the little state, whose prosperity was founded on foreign trade, grew too weak to defend its frontier or affirm its position in the commerce of the world. Its wealth went forfeit to the English, and its territorial integrity lay at the mercy of its neighbours. In Switzerland again, republican government had lost much reputation. Here oligarchies had followed the example and instigation of Louis XIV., by usurping power where it had belonged to the people, or by illiberally consolidating it where their pre-eminence had always been recognised; and when rebellion resisted their supremacy in one canton, the lords of others came to the rescue. Only in Geneva had concessions been wrung from them by determined agitation. Many of the rural

cantons remained democratic, but in those with urban industries and without an aristocracy, trade corporations and guilds kept in full force the tyranny of the few over the many. In Italy, out of the reach of all external political influence and beneath the conqueror's jealousy, the tiny state of San Marino alone preserved in its village life the best traditions of primitive republicanism. ✓  
 NL Hence it was a coincidence of most serious import that within a few years of the appearance of Rousseau's book, there was founded by deliberate design the greatest republic of the world's history, and that this was achieved after a successful conflict with an European king, with the help of the French nation, and to the augmentation of the embarrassments surrounding the French monarchy.

Animosity against England was doubtless the chief determining cause of the alliance of France with the Americans, in their revolt from the yoke of George III. But sympathy with the purpose of the rebellious states, had no small share in forming the decision, notwithstanding the reluctance of the government to recognise a people's right to defy its rulers. In all classes, and in none more strongly than in the nobility, zeal for popular liberty prompted enthusiasm for America's emancipation. Before war was determined on, Vergennes remarked with anxiety that the root of the French delight in the Americans lay deeper than love of America or hatred of England. Through agents like Beaumarchais and Lafayette, liberal sentiment first gave the Americans covert succour; and then, when

Necker celebrated his entry into the ministry of finance by declaring that he could find the means for a two years' war without imposing extra taxation, and when the capitulation of Saratoga showed that fortune was not absent from the Americans, revenge sought with sympathy to win satisfaction in open hostilities. But even then republicanism was not regarded with real trust or approval. America itself, trained and biassed though it was in that direction, did not approach a republican form of government with entire confidence; and it would be little wide of the truth to say that Americans, like the Netherlanders in the age of the Reformation, adopted such a polity only because they could not do otherwise. After the successful issue of the conflict and the erection of the Union's constitution, misgivings became less obstinate. The new republic had not had time to demonstrate its stability and efficiency, and its conditions rendered it far from an apposite example for an European state; but belief in its kind of constitution became a perfectly tenable position, and once again in the history of man were justified hopes of genuine self-government by highly civilised communities. Though far from converting old France to the extreme consequences of the theory of the social contract, the event gave additional force and circulation to the floating democratic ideas, and familiarised the densest minds with the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people; while the struggle with an hereditary foe in behalf of insurgents gave occasion to much dangerous brooding over the lawfulness of rebellion.

These results were deep, enduring, and possessed of a power of rapid growth. Against them the French monarchy had only the ephemeral prestige of a victorious war to oppose. There immediately followed the financial crisis to which the government had so long been hurrying. After the dismissal of Turgot, matters went from bad to worse. The respectable Necker, though he did something towards bringing order into the accounts, relied chiefly on credit to save the bankrupt state, and in order to inspire confidence resorted to the bold and hazardous expedient of publishing a somewhat uncandid *compte rendu* : after him the light-hearted Calonne strove to give the government the semblance of buoyancy by a great display of extravagance. But still the annual deficit and the load of debt increased, and both statesmen found themselves forced to recur to the plans of Turgot. To Necker, this yielding to the inevitable brought dismissal as it had to his great predecessor. Calonne's fall, however, was accompanied with peculiar circumstances. When his fatuous policy of reckless expenditure became no longer possible, and fundamental reform was imperative, he shrank from employing the doubtful services of royal edicts, and advised the king to convoke an assembly of notables, a device not unknown to history since the decay of the States-General. This body, composed for the most part of members of the privileged classes, though it contained a liberal element, proved captious and unmanageable. It refused to be the medium of reforms, or to relieve the king of any responsibility in his perilous dilemma. But it



gave decided expression to a feeling which had been gaining strength for some time. It declared itself to be no representative of the nation, being only a collection of the king's nominees, and therefore without the power to authorise new taxes. By implication, the States-General were declared the proper dispensers of extraordinary supplies.\*

Disappointed by the restiveness of his assembly, and hated by the court for his tergiversation, Calonne retired from office. His successor abandoned his experiment, and returned to the old method of taxation with the sanction of the parliaments. In June, 1787, five edicts were submitted to the parliament of Paris for registration, two of which imposed new taxes, while the remaining three provided for the commutation of forced labour, free trade in grain, and the establishment of provincial assemblies throughout the country, with ramifications in the district and village. These latter were registered, and thus in all the innocence of blind inexperience the Revolution was inaugurated in the provinces. Over the two first a heated struggle ensued. The parliament remonstrated in the language of the philosophers thinly disguised by citations from history. The dispute was promptly taken up by the remaining twelve parliaments of France, and elicited from them the same kind of response. The king then exiled the Paris magistracy to Troyes, arresting its most violent members, and finally issued edicts which virtually suppressed all the parliaments of the realm by decreeing a judicial reform similar in many respects to the improve-

\* Cf. Von Sybel, *Gesch. des Revolutionszeit* (trans.), i. 48.

ments in the administration of justice afterwards secured by the Revolution. And now was reiterated in determined accents a demand for the summoning of the States-General; until at last the king was obliged to give way to his recalcitrant magistrates. His edicts and ministers were abandoned at the same time that the parliaments were reinstated, and a definite promise was given to convoke the national council of old.

The incident, which hurried the king to give this pledge and to renounce arbitrary measures, was very portentous for the immediate future. In Dauphiny the three orders of nobility, priesthood, and commons, met together, declared themselves the Estates of the province, which had long been suspended, and passed resolutions condemning the late conduct of the Crown, and demanding that their provincial constitution should be restored with double representation of the commons. Their mere discontent differed not from the complaints expressed by the separate orders all over the country at this time of general excitement, yet the episode betrayed symptoms especially menacing to the royal authority. Everywhere the nobles were in the forefront of seditious agitation, everywhere the clergy gave their sanction to treasonable utterances, everywhere the citizens took part with those who resisted the king. Everywhere, in short, the government met with hostile demonstrations. But this spontaneous fusion of the three orders showed that the old power of the crown was on the brink of destruction. Though the French monarchy had been greatly aided in its rise to autocracy by inventing

a standing army, it had never reposed on a military basis. Neither the police nor the soldiery, if we except the foreign mercenaries, afforded it independent support. They were instruments pertaining to the peculiar social order from which the monarchy derived power, and were constantly useful in suppressing brigandage and bread riots, but they did not form an independent source of authority: they ever remained a part of the society, and contained within themselves the same divisions and discontents that vexed the nation. The monarchy's real foundations were formed by the conflicting interests and unequable organisation of its subjects; and if for a common purpose these subjects forgot their antagonism and together withstood its decrees, the ground was cut from beneath it and its whole structure tottered. Hence the eagerness of the government to avoid giving further incentives to coalitions like that in Dauphiny.

And indeed the situation demanded the utmost prudence. During the recent events aversion to the government had become an unreasoning passion in the minds of the more excitable portion of the nation. The assembly of notables was loudly applauded for resisting the king's proposals, though they were wholly in favour of the people; and the parliaments had won immense popularity in their endeavours to thwart the beneficent schemes of the crown. Redress of grievances was forgotten in a feverish desire to place the state on a new and sounder basis. The doctrine of the sovereignty of the people was discussed and developed in all

directions with an impetuosity which defied The Censure; and the court had to seek defence by surrendering this weapon, and retaining in its own interest a body of opposition pamphleteers. Nothing is more difficult than to estimate the influence of ideas on a community. Like motives in the individual, they can only be measured by results, when it is often impossible to distinguish the shares of the various factors in the production of the joint effect; like all mental processes, they develop in secret as if by unconscious cerebration. They constantly belie the most careful estimate of their logical significance; and when all possible weight has been granted to the French intellectual movement of the eighteenth century, and every aggravating circumstance has been taken into consideration, historians can only account for this antimonarchical ebullition by reference to latent feelings of suspicion which misgovernment had generated in the minds of the people.\*

The glib explanation which wholly attributes the outburst of the French Revolution to the misery of the people is as near a falsehood as a partial and inadequate explanation can be. In point of fact the French masses were not worse off than their brethren in other continental countries. In many respects they were exceptionally well situated; and in general it will be found that their advantages were powerful causes in kindling the revolution, and that the movement most readily gained admittance wherever in Europe the greatest immunity from hardship was enjoyed. It cannot be too often

\* Cf. John Morley, *Essay on Turgot*.

repeated that the French Revolution was not a convulsive struggle of a people tortured beyond endurance, but the collapse of an effete social order, and that it happened to be French only because in France the process of decay had been most rapid and spontaneous. And this implies that on the whole the lot of the French people was preferable to that of the more backward nations, that the French peasant was more free from the constraints and obligations of feudalism than were the peasantry on the rest of the continent.

Yet the vexations of the multitude were grievous enough to be a grave danger to the state, and they proved to be very instrumental in throwing the country into anarchy when the customary guardians of order ceased to discharge their functions, and discontent was otherwise invited to run riot. Notwithstanding the virtual extinction of serfage, the almost total abolition of seignorial authority, and the limitation of forced services and dues, the peasantry of France smarted under a number of evils which were none the less exasperating because they were but the shadows of their original forms, and could be seen in far harsher shapes elsewhere. Though the lord of the manor no longer resided among them as an hereditary governor, they were still often obliged to tolerate the ravages of his pigeons and game; to bring their corn to his mill, their grapes to his winepress, and their dough to his oven;\* to pay toll at his bridges, to give heavy fees on the transfer

\* Or, rather, which was worse, to the monopolists who leased them.

of property, and to submit to a variety of minor exactions. Further, though a great number owned the land they cultivated, they were unable to put themselves beyond the reach of the charges adhering to it or to escape the requisitions of the Church. The absence of the seignors threw the collection of these payments and dues into the hands of agents, destitute of the feudal sentiment and anxious to win the favour of their spendthrift employers; and if perchance any lord did come to reside for a time on his estate it was only for the sake of retrenchment by living in parsimonious seclusion till he could return with replenished purse to the scene of his pleasures. What remnants of authority the lords still retained were necessarily also delegated to inferiors, who corruptly exercised them as a means of gain. Not even in the towns could the peasant earn a livelihood without encountering all kinds of impediments from the municipal institutions; and too often he had to buy the mere right to labour.

But it was from the central government that the most crushing demands came. Through the intendants, who were not such free agents, however, as to justify Law's assertion that they were the true rulers of France, the districts were loaded with a certain weight of taxation, a certain levy for the militia, and a certain quantity of forced labour on the roads and other works. In themselves sufficiently injurious to the prosperity of the country, these exactions were distributed and imposed in such a manner that they could not fail to cripple industry and mock honest effort. By three ways they

impoverished the people. They discouraged self-help by putting a premium on squalor and indigence; aided by the local tolls and customs, they hampered labour and exchange; and they directly deprived the labourer of a preposterously large portion of his earnings. Yet only a fraction of these imposts reached the king's exchequer. Many of the taxes were collected through farmers, who secured a handsome profit, and were deemed of such importance that Fleury called the chiefs the forty pillars of the state;\* while all the imposts were levied by very expensive machinery, and in some cases at very great loss to individuals who were forced in turn to collect from door to door. But the worst part of the system was the scale of exemptions which protected from the fisc those who could best pay, and laid the most vexatious taxes on the labouring poor. Vauban, for example, in his unpalatable representations to Louis XIV., counted eighteen classes exempt from the *taille*. It was this evil which blocked the way to every adequate reform, and rendered nugatory all other improvements in the financial administration. As long as all the nobles, officials, and clergy, and

\* The only gainers by the expensive, unequal, arbitrary, and intricate method of levying the taxes, said Hume, "are the *Financiers*, a race of men rather odious to the nobility and the whole kingdom. If a prince or minister, therefore, should arise, endowed with sufficient discernment to know his own and the public interest, and with sufficient force of mind to break through the ancient customs, we might expect to see these abuses remedied; in which case, the differences between that absolute government and our free one, would not appear so considerable as at present."—*Of Civil Liberty. Essays*, edited by Green and Grose, i., 162.

many independent citizens, evaded a fair share of contribution to the revenue of the state, no fiscal scheme could be other than a systematic tyranny to the poor man.

One industrial passion alone this unhopeful lot failed to quench in the breast of the French rustic. His longing to possess a bit of the soil remained as a motive to thrift and exertion. In order to become the owner of a patch of ground he would toil and hoard with invincible pertinacity, and the pecuniary difficulties of the nobility often gave him the chance of an unequal bargain. But when a landowner he was still unable to lift his head, and he lacked more than ever incentives to enterprise and industry now that unprivileged proprietorship marked him as the special victim of feudal charges and the royal fisc. His farming, we are continually told, was unskilful in management and starved by want of capital; his condition beggarly and degraded. But the truth is that his want of skill was simply want of education and of opportunity to enjoy the fair reward of intelligent exertion; his dearth of capital, at a time when agricultural operations were conducted exclusively by means of rural labour, was nothing more than insufficiency of produce left him by his superiors to sustain strength and a cheerful spirit of toil, to form a fund against the calamities of bad seasons, to pay the country craftsmen for proper tools, and to keep the necessary proportion of live stock on his farm;\* while he purposely assumed a general


\* This last point especially manifested the ignorance of penury. "An advantageous rotation of crops," said Young, "and that



appearance of brutish destitution in order to evade the taxes arbitrarily assessed on all kinds of property. It was indeed a horrifying revelation to Rousseau when, having strayed into French territory, he found a hospitable peasant obliged to enjoy furtively the better rewards of his industry. Since that time the small French landowners have greatly increased, both through the seizures and confiscations at the Revolution, and through normal means. Hence their circumstances are frequently referred to for information respecting the merits of a peasant proprietary. But seldom is it remembered that the indispensable conditions on which such a class can long remain prosperous—a hearty spirit of neighbourly co-operation and frank dealing, the ready acceptance of all available improvements—were in many parts precluded for many a generation by the habits of suspicion and ignorance engendered under the ancient *régime*.

This sombre account is, of course, but a rough generalisation which may serve to indicate one of the chief conditions of the Revolution. In a country of so varied a character as France possessed at this period, every assertion, to be quite exact, would

arrangement of a farm which makes cattle necessary to corn, and corn necessary to cattle, on which the profit from arable land much depends, is what the French have hardly an idea of. In their practice it is never seen, and in their books it is never to be read." "In Normandy, the Bas Poitou, Limousin, Quercy, and Guienne, the importance of cattle is pretty well understood; in some districts very well. In all the rest of the kingdom . . . there would in eighteen-twentieths of it be scarcely any cattle at all, were it not for the practice of ploughing with them."—*Travels in France*, chaps. xxii. and xxiv.



require interminable qualifications and restrictions. Composed of a number of provinces acquired at different times and under different circumstances, the realm contained a multitude of dissimilar institutions, tenures, and customs, by which the influences of feudal tradition and the central government were variously modified; and it would be possible to draw examples of notable prosperity as well as of appalling misery by confining attention to Languedoc, the first of the *pays d'état*,\* on the one hand, and to Auvergne and Dauphiny, where the worst kinds of metayer farming obtained, on the other. But on the whole it appears that, manifold as were their grievances, the French peasantry had not lost all patience, as they certainly had not lost all spirit; and the initiative to their insurrection is not to be found in their hardships, though these provided ample incitement to anarchy and revenge when once resignation and habit had been disturbed from without. In all probability they would have waited quietly for relief till reform had made way in the administration.

Reform, however, stumbled fatally, and the long-suffering spirit was prematurely unsettled. Though separated by a great distance from the upper classes, the peasants did not escape the contagion of the reigning discontent, nor did they fail to understand somewhat of the new ideas which were discussed wherever any mental activity existed. And as the philanthropic notions became accepted, they were frequently addressed by their superiors

\* Provinces in which some of the original self-government had been allowed to survive.

on the iniquitous injustice to which they were a prey. So long had it been since the people had taken part in national affairs, that only here and there did anyone suspect that perhaps the unfortunate masses might put to dangerous use the arguments of indiscreet innovators. In the preambles to the edicts of the king were sometimes drawn up elaborate indictments against the privileged and capitalist classes, and the wrongs of the poor became a favourite weapon in the disputes between public functionaries.\* Moreover, while the letter of the law remained unaltered, a more kindly spirit invaded its administration to the very perceptible advantage of the labouring poor, who naturally reasoned that there must be some ground for departing from the traditional disregard of their feelings.

When, therefore, the industrial reforms of Turgot were promulgated, only to be partially withdrawn, and the relations of employers and employed became seriously dislocated, the people were prepared to infer the possibility and need of change to their behoof. Later, when the edict for the reconstitution of provincial government was enforced, the interference with the old order was so far-reaching, that the minds of all were quite unbalanced. Many evidences of active dislike to wealth and rank appeared in the experiment of introducing a large measure of self-government in a nation where numberless distinctions and privileges at once forbade social harmony and administrative uniformity.†

\* Cf., especially De Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Régime*, bk. ii., chap. xvii.

† *Ibid*, chap. xix.

The evils of inequality before the law and the fisc, were never more prominent than in this attempt to bestow public freedom on men who could not form a parish meeting without including a variety of conditions which defeated all schemes for a just apportionment of burdens, and excluded all chances of fair-minded discussion. If Frenchmen have since that critical time shown themselves more eager for equality than freedom, they can at least plead their terrible experience of an unequable dispensation, and the obstacles it opposed to the assumption of liberty, as palliatives to their impatient attitude towards the real nature of things.

And while the condition of the peasantry is not to be hastily pronounced irremediable by regular means, the character of the nobility is not to be unreservedly condemned. The nobles were not, as we have said, monsters of oppression, nor were they enjoyers of full content. They were not cruel by nature, though their extravagances and social habits made them hard landlords; and they reluctantly tendered total submission to the monarchy, though they made their appointed homage to the throne as pleasurable as possible. They were careless of their territorial duties, since they had been ~~X~~ deprived of political influence; they were absorbed in courtly vanities since they had been compelled to flock around their master. Thus, without being much worse than their fellow-men, they were engulfed in a vortex of fatuities and dissipation. They were profligates and prodigals, but they were not miscreants. They exacted the last farthing

from their dependants, they made enormous demands on the public funds, they monopolised all lucrative offices and sinecures, they perpetually turned the government into a mere plaything of favouritism, corruption, and intrigue; but their natures never lost common generosity, though their sense of duty was obscured by the methodised frivolity of their lives. The vices of the order were, in fact, more dangerous to the monarchy, which had corrupted it, than damning to the persons who possessed them; and the history of its demoralisation is a conspicuous illustration of one aspect of Montesquieu's dictum, "la monarchie se perd, lorsque le prince, rapportant tout uniquement à lui, appelle l'état à sa capitale, la capitale à sa cour, et la cour à sa seule personne."\*

Accordingly it was only natural that with a turn of fashion the French nobles took keen interest in scientific discovery, granted the savant a high social position, then came to be less exclusive and more simple in their manners, and finally embraced the democratic theories. Without their conversion the revolutionary principles would hardly have ripened in time to interfere at the state's financial crisis. It mattered little that the doctrines were their natural foes. Long separation from public affairs had made them incapable of detecting the true tendencies of social movements. They knew that their novel diversion menaced the power of the monarchy, and they were well content that it should, but they heeded not the accompanying consequences to themselves. Nor was this blindness

\* *Esprit des Lois*, livre viii., chap. vi.

peculiar to them, for the same want of vision was one of the most remarkable features of the transactions which introduced the Revolution, and characterised all classes at this time, when rapid social changes had not as now trained men to forecast, perhaps too nervously, the drift of events, in relation to their personal interests. So they cherished their perilous notions in as good faith as the rest of the society. And with their unsuspicious encouragement of the revolutionary propaganda went genuine participation in its philanthropic sentiments.\* As the day of reckoning approached, they became more and more awake to the opportunities for good which they possessed. On the eve of the revolution they were sincerely casting about for means to benefit the people, and to satisfy their new-born feelings of humanity, which were none the less sincere because they were accompanied with much idyllic nonsense. It seems strange that they should fall just when they were growing more worthy of their position. But stranger still is it, that one of the chief proximate causes of their ruin was this very improvement itself.

Unfitted to save themselves, they could claim no

\* In his chapter on the revolution, Young endeavours to justify the sufferings of the nobility by showing from the *cahiers* that they steadily demanded the preservation of their feudal rights. A few pages further on, however, when justifying the acts of the National Assembly by comparing them with the demands of the *cahiers*, he cites more suggestions of wholesome reform from the nobles than from the Tiers Etat (*Travels in France*, chap. xxi.). De Tocqueville gives a more careful account of the *cahiers* of the nobles, and reaches a far more favourable conclusion.

assistance from others. Many of the old families were destitute, and all were deep in debt. In vain had they contrived numberless modes of taxing the state. The original aristocracy sank lower and lower, and forfeited all the consideration which might otherwise have remained to it. The ranks of the nobility were filled with recruits from the middle classes, who had purchased titles and privileges belonging to the thousands of vendible offices retailed by the impecunious state. Nobility thus became distinguished by immunities from taxation instead of by ancient lineage; and it became a point of honour rather than of avarice, for the class to avoid contributing to the support of the government. When this fraudulent perversion of an aristocratic institution became established, all its claims to respect vanished, and the invidious elements of rank alone remained. Want of true dignity was supplied by arrogance; want of real influence by offensive insistence on unjust privileges and distinctions. The middle classes felt acutely aggrieved by the disdain of ennobled parvenus, and rebelled against paying for their immunities. The mulcted peasant had not fallen so low as to suffer unresented the contemptuous demeanour of his unprofitable superiors. After the publication of Necker's *compte rendu*,—a document received with immense curiosity,—they also knew whom they had to thank for the great weight of taxation and the constant suspension of payment of the state's debts: after Rossbach they also knew that the plea of military service was a sorry apology for the existence of a dissolute noblesse.

The middle classes were, moreover, growing conscious of new importance, and they daily aspired to become something more than mere drudges in the government of the country that they enriched. In the last half of the eighteenth century, trade and industry advanced with a rapidity till then unknown, and plebeian wealth accumulated faster than saleable titles could corrupt it. Though the administration of the state was dependent on the middle class for capable men of business, the nobles pertinaciously barred the way to the more honourable positions. In the meantime the spirit of independence, which the Jansenist parliaments had once opposed to despotism and Jesuistry, broke forth and flooded an immensely wider area than the corporations of hereditary magistrates. All who were engaged in manufactures, commerce, estate management, finance, law, medicine, and the civil service, together with the whole of the ill-used lower clergy, shook off their indifference to political affairs, and under the name of the Third Estate began to set up claims for a share in the government.

Such being the political attitude of the different classes in the state, it was inevitable that some great organic change would take place spontaneously as the infirmities of the monarchy became destructive of all government. Many dangers are inseparable from such moments, but there existed a peculiar source of instability to French society at this time. Owing to the obstacles surrounding sober industry, to oppressive game laws, and to the countless temptations held out to illicit dealing by



the trading regulations spread over old France, an enormous number of vagabonds, poachers, and smugglers preyed upon individual security and the general wealth, and formed a serious menace against order in a time of scarcity. The country, since it was divested of its more substantial inhabitants by the attractions of the towns and the disadvantages attending agricultural life, was unable of itself to cope with mendicancy, or to suppress vagrancy. Hence, there was always quartered at large on society a vast army of ruffians, which the most energetic efforts of the government—and very energetic efforts had not been wanting—failed entirely to disperse.

But brigandage might have prevailed in the country, and riot in the towns, without shaking the state, if the government had not been confined to a centre which was also a favourite resort of the dangerous classes. Paris, unfortunately, was by that time not only the seat of government and public opinion, but the magazine of a large quantity of the material from which mobs are made. The administration, though it worked through many subordinates, was very highly centralised, and the provinces were accustomed to look to the supreme head for all initiative, and frequently for permission to carry out the most necessary detail of routine. Indeed, the very expressions used by some writers to describe the famous centralisation of the Empire have been employed by others to illustrate the supervision of the ancient *régime*. The provincials were consequently trained to follow with implicit obedience the mandates and vogue

of Paris, and seldom ventured to act on their own responsibility, or to anticipate the lead of the capital by thinking for themselves. Such was the result of the monarchy's systematic suppression of all provincial independence; and it provided the most instructive and painful example of the second aspect of Montesquieu's aphorism.

The capital was also by far the most important industrial town. Its trade in articles of luxury and taste, which almost monopolised the European market, afforded employment to an immense number of artisans, who were further attracted by a freedom from restraints not to be found elsewhere in the kingdom. This large manufacturing population had repeatedly shown itself prone to turbulence when industry was disordered, and filled with the dangerous conviction that from the king proceeded all weal and woe. Here, then, was a congenial retreat for all the starving ruffians of the country round. Here thronged outlaws from other countries, professional criminals, and all who take their chance of picking up a livelihood in a rich and extensive town without caring whether the means be fair or foul. Here was congregated a rabble glad to follow anyone who would lead them to plunder. Here dwelt thousands of ignorant toilers, ready to listen to the sophisms and temptings of demagogues at the first pinch of distress, and eager to answer any invitation to rebel against their superiors if public order gave signs of failing, or employers of labour were hindered from providing them with their customary wages. By ill chance the perturbation

attending the summons of the States-General was aggravated by great scarcity of food. In July, 1788, a terrible tempest destroyed the crops in a great part of France, and especially in the districts round Paris; and the following winter was of unequalled severity. Very inadequate supplies were obtainable from abroad, owing to recent short harvests and the demands made by the war in Eastern Europe. The people suffered great privations, and in Paris the distress was particularly severe.\* The disaster elicited great largesses from the rich, but the populace of the capital indulged in sanguinary bread riots, and, mindful of the *pacte de famine*, attributed the dearth to the nefarious schemes of the court and monopolists.

As the time for the meeting of the States-General approached, ominous indications of anarchy appeared in the provinces. In the parish and the district the whole system of taxation had been brought under discussion, and a statement of grievances had been debated at the request of the assembly of the province. Finally, a similar statement had to be drawn up by the command of the king for the instruction of the coming national parliament. A belief in the speedy redress of wrongs was thus engendered, together with a heightened sense of injury, just when famine was inflicting the worst pangs of a stinted subsistence. Hence, spontaneous anarchy throughout nearly all France. Storehouses of grain were plundered, corn dealers were robbed and murdered, game preserves were invaded, and dues of all kinds were repudiated. In the capital the disturbances speedily

\* Annual Register, 1789, pp. 29, 36.

took the form of political tumults. Against such universal turbulence the police were impotent, and military force was necessary to overcome the rioters. But at first the army was very sparingly employed. No examples were made, and if one insurrection was quelled another shortly broke out in the same neighbourhood. On this occasion as on so many others, the scruples of humanity entailed the same consequences as the falterings of remorse. Anarchy was allowed to gather strength till only the most determined onslaughts of the military could have restored order ; and by that time the soldiers had been seduced from their duty, and either rendered neutral or enrolled among the insurgents.

Nor was this wonderful. The private soldiers had been treated no better by their officers than the people by their superiors. Raised by a most unjust conscription, the French common soldiers were restricted to the ranks ; they had to submit to blows and insults from their officers ; they were fed on the hardest fare and lodged in the most wretched quarters. They too had been inoculated with the new spirit, and claimed a portion of the heritage of the Third Estate. Confronted with their insurgent brethren, they listened to the persuasions of demagogues and the blandishments of the *canaille* rather than to the commands of their officers, who were themselves, to say truth, very reluctant to resort to arms ; and as no precautions were taken to preserve the discipline and *esprit de corps* of the regiments by isolation, they first became untrustworthy and then deserted to the rabble. Their example was followed by some of the foreign mer-

cenaries, till ultimately only a handful of alien troops stood between the embodiment of the monarchy and the fury of outcast Paris. When the deputies met at Versailles, they had to deliberate, without any efficient protection, in the immediate neighbourhood of an ungovernable mob.

On May 5th, 1789, opened the States-General. Suddenly awakened from a slumber of two centuries, they appeared clothed in much of their mediæval apparel. As of old, they came divided into three bodies, representing the nobles, clergy, and commons, and each body brought with it the *cahiers* or instructions which were to guide it in the discharge of its trust. But in his heart every member was meditating on the dreams of a new era, and the *cahiers* were filled with schemes of revolution. The old forms were merely vehicles of a demand for an entire reconstruction of the State. Even the nobility, while strongly insisting on its honorary distinctions, recommended radical reforms in pursuance of the inalienable rights of man, and offered suggestions for liberating the lower classes from inequitable burdens, personal indignities, and involuntary ignorance.

According to ancient usage the three orders should have deliberated and voted separately, but everyone felt that the times were gone by when the Third Estate could be placed at the mercy of a coalition of the nobles with the clergy; and, in fact, the government had doubled the representatives of the commons, a provision which would have been meaningless if they had intended the assembly to vote by orders and not

*per capita*. Necker, who had been recalled on the dismissal of Loménie de Brienne, advised this measure, but he hesitated to announce authoritatively to the clergy and nobles that they must abandon their former advantageous position. Unfortunately the nobles and higher clergy regarded with great repugnance any plan of treating on terms of equality with their inferiors, because it would efface their valued distinctions, though in their *cahiers* the expediency of voting by individuals on questions of taxation was sometimes discussed and admitted. The pride of rank grew yet more exclusive when brought face to face with the plebeian throng. Many of the *Tiers Etat* were no better than the pettifogging lawyers who swarmed around the minutely articulated social structure. Very few of them were men of proved capacity: hardly any of the government's many able servants had a seat. Some men of conspicuous ability were among them, but these were for the most part without political experience. Before this motley crowd the nobles would renounce none of their prescriptive advantages. Hence, instead of proceeding to consider measures for the immediate relief of the government, the States-General rushed into a dispute concerning the adaptation of its ancient forms to present conditions.

The struggle over the constitutional question proved fatal to the constitution itself. Left to themselves, the Commons opposed for a time a passive resistance to the pretensions of the clergy and nobles, and then declared themselves the National Assembly. Three days later, having been

prevented from entering their hall, they retired to a neighbouring tennis court, and there swore not to separate till they had created a new constitution. From a committee of ways and means the States were thus turned into a Constituent Assembly. The conduct of the commons was precisely in accordance with the wishes of the public, and many of the other orders felt bound to follow it. Out of the clergy there deserted to them the curés, whose wrongs and feelings were almost identical with those of the *Tiers Etat*, together with the more politic of the bishops; and from the nobles many of the more enlightened aristocracy and a few seekers after popular influence. The king, however, while expressing his willingness to place in the hands of the States-General the affairs of the monarchy, decreed the separation of the orders. In other words, he acknowledged the supremacy of the States, but prohibited the National Assembly. He practically resigned his power at the same time that he declared war against the only body which could assume it. Yet he would not resort to force, and he left the rebellious assembly at battle with its antagonists, who were from this time Royalists.

This manœuvre disastrously sharpened the hostility between the people and the crown. The consignment of the royal claims to the charge of those who desired to retain the last fragments of feudalism involved a change of ministry and a change of policy. Though compelled to sink for the time its main contention, and to join the National Assembly, the feudal party made use of its alliance with the king to give him new ministers

inclined to adopt more spirited measures for the maintenance of the royal authority and the old *régime*. But its acquisition of power was too late to allow it to do more than irritate the people against the monarchy. The army had grown insubordinate, the mob supreme. Protection of life and property became dependent on the civic guards, who now began to be enrolled all over the country, and soon were to figure as the National Guard and too often as the armed populace. The Assembly had to proceed to its task of making a constitution amid a storm of popular excitement and tumultuous outbreaks. Paris was given up to brutal riots. The Bastille was destroyed, depôts of arms were sacked, provision stores were plundered, and unpopular personages murdered. In the country the disturbances took the form of veritable Jacqueries. Throughout almost all the land, châteaux were blazing, nobles and gentry were robbed or killed, government officers and tax-gatherers were put to flight. The people, rendered wild by the sudden relaxation of constraint and obligations, impatiently anticipated the decisions of its representatives by plunging into a frenzy of barbarous reprisal.

Nor did the National Assembly prove much less hasty than the nation. On the night of August 4th, at the suggestion of the liberal nobles, almost every vestige of feudalism was swept away. A few sittings were spent in putting into form of law this counterpart to the havoc in the provinces, and then a declaration of the rights of man was discussed and adopted, which recognised the claims of the people to interfere in the business of government



to a degree suicidal for a legislative body sitting in the vicinity of a host of excited insurgents. Next was planned a parliament of one chamber, founded on a very low franchise, and subject only to a suspensive veto of the king for the space of two sessions. By this time the general anarchy had invaded the assembly and, by swaying its counsels, was gaining strength and diffusion. The debates were held in Paris, after the mob had taken Louis captive on the occasion of a panic produced by rumours of military violence. There the august body was constrained and brow-beaten by an organised system of threats and uproar. Side by side with the constituent legislature, stormed and declaimed gatherings of the rabble and orators of the mob. Every measure of moment brought forward in the one was discussed and criticised by the other; and the resolutions of the demagogues found not only formal expression through the radical members of the assembly, but unanswerable cogency from the howls of the galleries or menaces of street politicians. The action of clubs, not unknown in the later years of the absolute monarchy, now became of the first importance. The Jacobins, acquiring their dread name with the removal to Paris, had recruited an obedient though undisciplined army in the metropolis; and besides being the most powerful association at the seat of the political contest, they soon possessed in all parts of France affiliated societies which implicitly followed the word transmitted from headquarters. In the name of the sovereign people and the rights of man, all that was worthless and homeless in the

city conspired to coerce the moderate party, and to put to flight the conservatives, of the National Assembly. No forms of decency protected the dignity of the body, no efficient police guarded the safety of its members. With revolting frankness, the ragged band brought terrorism to bear on the counsels which were to determine the future of the French state, and the immediate guidance of the nation.\*

This kind of policy proved eminently successful. Before long, most of the aristocracy, hunted, threatened, and despoiled, ever in fear of murder, fled beyond the frontier, leaving revolution to pursue its course, unhindered by the protests of the conservative classes. In the Constituent Assembly itself, the apologists for the old order gradually slunk away, the voice of those who knew what was worth retaining from the past became hushed, and nearly all the remaining members who were inclined towards dispassionate conclusions suffered themselves to be hurried into decisions very much at variance with their true opinions. Coupled with inexperience and shallow political ideas, this craven mood induced legislation which

\* It has been the fashion with a certain class of writers to speak of the intervention of the mob as necessary to save the Revolution—in other words, to maintain the independence of the National Assembly against the designs of the court and the king. One of the earliest to give serious expression to this view, was Brandes, a fellow student of Stein, in his *Politische Betrachtungen über die französische Revolution*: one of the latest is Mr. John Morley, in his Essay on Robespierre. Now that M. Taine has drawn more attention to the true nature of the intervention, and of the independence enjoyed by the Assembly, it will be necessary to treat the optimist view with considerable caution.

was hasty, crude, and imprudent to the last degree, though a great number of the innovations could not fail to be of lasting benefit to the country. With many drastic correctives for traditional abuse went violent provocatives of civil and religious schism, and pitifully imperfect provisions for the maintenance of order.

In only too close conformity with Montesquieu's distinction, and from jealousy of the king and Mirabeau, the executive and legislative powers were entirely separated, and ministers were prohibited from taking part in the discussions of the assembly. The importance of the executive was further reduced by a minute application of local autonomy, which was also able to claim philosophical authority through its agreement with the suggestions of d'Argenson. France was divided into eighty-three departments, five hundred and seventy-four districts, and four thousand seven hundred and thirty cantons, according to density of population and geographical convenience, with no regard for historical connections. These divisions, however, were chiefly mechanical; and the true basis of government and prime administrative unit was the commune or parish, which was given a municipal constitution of such independent and democratic character, and was invested with such extensive and various functions, that France was justly said to be cut up into forty-four thousand republics. Exercising immediate authority over their national guards, and the regular troops within their territory, the communes transacted besides their own local business much of the work which

properly belonged to the central administration, and provided the electoral basis of the whole system of government. The power of the electors, therefore, would have been commensurate with their multifarious duties, if the enormous tax upon their time had not made them glad to acquiesce in the proposals of vulgar agitators, and the great number of poorly-paid offices had not raised up a large body of clamorous and needy politicians eager to ease them of their responsibilities in exchange for their suffrages.

In other respects the work of the assembly was more happy. The executive machinery was entirely recast, with great gain in simplicity and directness. The army was reorganised to a great extent on the principle of seniority; most of the grievances of the common soldiers were redressed, and the right to elect the non-commissioned officers from among themselves was granted to them. In reforming the administration of justice the presence of able practical lawyers saved the assembly from many grave indiscretions. Trial by jury in criminal cases was instituted, and the old parliaments, who had forfeited their popularity since they had contended for the ancient constitution of the States-General, were summarily suppressed. But the one theoretical excellence of the former system, whose reality is now hard to determine, was lost. The independence of the judges was loudly condemned as contrary to the sovereignty of the people, and the courts were founded on the votes of the enfranchised citizens. Yet, by creating justices of the peace, a real boon was conferred on the people.

Finally, from motives of the most various kinds, the assembly deprived the country of what experience and information its members had acquired by declaring them ineligible for the new Legislative Assembly.

On the completion of the constitution France found itself at a crisis immeasurably more perilous than the financial difficulties which had opened the way for revolution. In addition to bankruptcy there now threatened intestine strife, foreign war, and general disruption of all social bonds. The new system of taxation, vitiated by excessive burdens on land, had neither got into working order nor secured respect by moral or physical means; the sales of confiscated property had not covered the liabilities as had been expected, and many claims for compensation to individuals had been incurred by the new changes; while the reckless multiplication of *assignats*, though they levied indirectly and disastrously on industry a tax which in some sense indemnified the revenue for the evasion of the proper imposts, was rapidly exhausting its own resources. The wanton overthrow of the Church, the confiscation of its possessions, the dissolution and sale of the monasteries, and the irreligious ecclesiastical constitution ordained instead, had brought the country to the brink of civil war. The greater part of the clergy, who had hitherto been trusty promoters of the revolution, rebelled against the secular management of ecclesiastical affairs, and preferred suspension to swearing allegiance to the new dispensation; while the peasantry, terrified by their warnings against

sacraments from spurious authority, recoiled from the unhallowed ministrations of constitutional intruders, and took up arms to defend the persons and functions of their non-juring pastors. Meanwhile the partisans of anarchy incited the peasants to renew at intervals their attacks on property and rank. Provincial towns were often mastered by the mob, and sometimes even involved in open war with one another. In the capital the expense of feeding and quieting the populace had grown so insupportable that it became necessary to disperse those who lounged in the national workshops, to the great exasperation of the worthless portion of the inhabitants and its unruly leaders.

Abroad, the perils of the royal family, the representations of the *émigrés*, who had formed a hostile camp on the German frontier and vented cries for vengeance against the Revolution at every court, together with an instinctive antipathy to the deeds and principles of the movement, had produced the deepest enmity towards the new government and manifold designs for its forcible destruction. Paris and the whole country were ever in terror of the onslaught of some resistless coalition to be followed by the restoration of the old *régime*, and the proscription of those who had taken a prominent part in the establishment of the new order. Whenever the monarchs of Europe were reported to have formed projects of invasion, the revolutionary leaders trembled for their lives, buyers of confiscated land saw their purchases in jeopardy, and those who had been relieved of burdens and exactions dreaded their re-imposition.

The futile flight of the king turned these fears against the throne. The court was viewed with the greatest suspicion, and when in September, 1791, Louis accepted the constitution, the recent declaration of Pillnitz, though in truth of harmless intent and especially innocuous on the reconciliation of the king with the National Assembly, had struck fresh apprehension of foreign arms and distrust of the royal purposes into the heart of the nation. By this time, too, the more sober classes had grown weary of political tumult and were well content with the acquisitions they had obtained. The new elections showed that the interest of the citizens in public affairs had greatly cooled. But so much the more violent and successful were the few adventurous politicians who used without scruple all the arts of cajolery and intimidation. As the main part of the nation became calm and disinclined to make the enormous sacrifices of time and energy demanded by the new constitution, the extreme minority became more busy and more determined to maintain its hold on public affairs by converting revolution into chaos. By means of a network of clubs and the employment of mercenary vagabonds, those who wished to appease unsatisfied ambition or to redeem blighted and ignoble careers, possessed themselves of political influence with the intention of sustaining social turmoil till they had won renown and enjoyment. Their tactics were triumphant from the first. In the new assembly the moderate party, though numerous and supported by a general desire for repose, was unable to form a compact and courageous

opposition against the violent agitators; and it was abundantly evident that the new form of government had not put a term to revolution. Men of extreme opinions and reckless demagogues had gained only the greater influence from its proclamation. Less stability than ever was derivable from the crown, finance was in yet more desperate straits, moderate counsels had almost entirely been banished from public business, religious conflict had stirred up an aggressive fanaticism among infidels and faithful alike, external dangers had routed calm consideration. Everything pointed to a renewal of confusion, and nothing was more calculated to precipitate a catastrophe than the tension of a foreign war.

Curiously enough, the wildest enemies of the constitution regarded war as fatal to their interests. They feared the eventual establishment of a military dictatorship, which would crush their seditions and schisms into one dead level of obedience to armed and organised authority. Herein they gave evidence of sagacious guidance, but none the less was war favourable to their immediate purposes; and a party, less criminal in its designs, though actuated by a determination to change rather than to amend the unworkable constitution, made war its first object. This was the Girondist party, which nearly made common cause with the Jacobins, though perhaps it cannot justly be charged with a deliberate intention of doing more than bringing the constitutional monarchy within the definition of a republic. By the eloquence and ability of its parliamentary leaders, and the craft and energy of



less conspicuous supporters, the Gironde immediately gained pre-eminence in the assembly, and set in motion anew the forces of destruction. Nor were more sinister excitements wanting to anarchical legislation. The intrusion of the rabble into debates, and the intimidation of members, became daily more frequent and violent. The self-respect of the assembly fell to the ground. Its dignity was smothered by the ribaldry of the mob. The former dregs of society rose to the surface, as the eddy of the revolution became more rapid. The Gironde was too respectable to fraternise with the representatives of ochlocracy, or to ingratiate itself with the *canaille*, yet in the pursuit of its own intemperate ends, and to the satisfaction of its shortsighted jealousies, it persistently played into the hands of those who sought to prey upon the industrious majority by means of a few thousand ruffians. Thus it prepared the way for the overthrow of the assembly, the murder of the king, and its own destruction; for the supremacy of the Commune of Paris and thereby of the ruffian band; for the September massacres, and the pillage of the property; for the Reign of Terror, and for twenty years of European carnage.

But the consequences of the first step in this direction, the embroilment of France with Germany, far transcended in lasting importance the licence of the Jacobin faction, or the horrors peculiar to war. From the day when Lafayette grafted the Bourbon white on the red and blue colours of the city of Paris, and declared that this tricolour would travel round the world, the spirit of the Revolution had

grown more proselytising. Hence one cause of the hostility of monarchs to the movement; hence one cause of the Revolution's readiness to attack the monarchies. Now when the chidings and threats of the continental powers had offended the pride, and excited the apprehension of the French; when the asylum granted in the Empire to the army of *émigrés* had made Germany the ally of the country's traitors; when the Emperor himself, notwithstanding his pacific desires, obstinately retained a domineering tone; war for the sake of the rights of man and the liberty of peoples found little genuine disfavour in the nation. Although deference was paid to the letter of international law by the dispersion of the *émigrés*, and the manifestoes of the enemy proclaimed their own emptiness, the war party was easily able to find an acceptable pretext for the declaration of hostilities. Leopold II. refused to abandon his demand for compensation to the Pope, who had been despoiled by the annexation to France of Avignon and the Venaissin, and to the German princes, who had been injured by the abolition of feudal rights in Alsace. More unendurably still, he insisted upon the French adopting a form of government less incompatible with the comfort of monarchs. The Gironde summed up its charges, real and imaginary, against Austria, and war was constitutionally declared by the king, who had been reluctantly compelled to choose a ministry from the dominant party.

Callous to its own sufferings, France went forth to impose on other nations the blessings of its

new polity. The Revolution, quitting the home where it was disgraced by the sanguinary strife of factions, advanced to take Europe by storm. Meanwhile, the French people endured the worst torments of oligarchical tyranny. In the name of the Demos—for it soon became impossible to plead the authority of the nation—they were subjected to the despotism of a savage *sansculotterie*. They experienced all the evils of a rule usurped by the fanatical, the ignorant, and the base; and they bitterly proved in their own persons that never in the history of the world had a more atrocious kind of government been invented.\* Deliverance was brought by the self-destructive elements inherent in such an extravagance of unreason, but it was impossible for the nation to recover at once from the trial. The apathy of reaction is not to be shaken off, nor are the vices of anarchy to be overcome, in a moment. France had to undergo the ordeal of military despotism before it could find absolution for the crimes and excesses of those terrible days, or disengage itself from the habits and influences of irregular governments. It had to submit to the usurpation of one, in order to atone for surrendering itself to the passions of a few.

The conditions of our purpose forbid us to follow the events which filled the interval between the declaration of war and the assumption of the whole civil and military power by Napoleon Bonaparte. In this interval happened incidents of the most astounding character. Though overwhelmed

\* That Jacobin rule tortured all classes of society, even the lowest, is another point especially well exhibited by M. Taine.

at home with murder and rapine, France provoked and sustained a conflict with all Europe. While the war of principles was on both sides converted into a war of conquest, the wretched levies of the Republic were permitted by the sordid disputes of the military monarchies to develop into monster citizen armies, which the pitiless exertions of an executive, as supreme as that of the constitution of 1791 was impotent, raised and drove to victory. Throughout the contest the right of the strong to despoil the weak, of the conquerors to annul engagements and plunder the vanquished, was asserted with all the assurance of barbarous times; and the era of popular government was introduced by enormities compared with which the sins of the late arbitrary monarchs were venial. At the same time, in the transactions attending the partitioning of Poland, and the collusive negotiations with the triumphant Republic, the rottenness of the European state-system was betrayed in its worst light, and the coming fall of absolutism was ushered in by a display of its meanest faults. And all the while the French, under the guise of national liberators, upset the governments of every country they invaded, and strove to bring all life and property under requisition, by fomenting internal discord, and raising to power any Jacobinical faction which they or any other circumstances had created.

But these events, though notorious, were entirely transformed within the following decade. Much of real consequence was achieved in the midst of wars, tumults, and conspiracies, but it wanted fixity

and solidity till it had been refined in the furnace of steadfast despotism. Not till the establishment of Bonaparte's dictatorship did the Revolution familiarise the peoples in bondage with the justice and unity which were to be its most lasting and precious boons to mankind. Not till the concussion of his ruthless, brutal ambition against the forces of old Europe had pulverised the worst anomalies of the traditional system, was the basis of the modern political order firmly laid. Hence the eclectic method of this narrative, while it passes over the interval occupied by the first revolutionary war, calls for separate notice of the sequence of events during the Consulate and the Empire.

## CHAPTER IV.

### EUROPE DISINTEGRATED.

“Τρόπον τινὰ τὸν αὐτὸν ἔκ τε ὀλιγαρχίας δημοκρατία γίγνεται καὶ ἐκ δημοκρατίας τύραννις.”

*Plato.*

“ Die bestimmten Lehrbuchseelen wurden so sehr vertauscht und vermischt, dass kein Teufel sie mehr erkennen konnte. . . . Die alten Könige bekamen neue Uniformen, neue Königthümer wurden gebacken und hatten Absatz wie frische Semmel, manche Potentaten hingegen wurden von Haus und Hof gejagt, und mussten auf andere Art ihr Brod zu verdienen suchen.”

“ Es war eine sonnig marmorne Hand, eine mächtige Hand, eine von den beiden Händen die das vielköpfige Ungeheuer der Anarchie gebändigt und den Völkerzweikampf geordnet hatten.”

*Heine.*

NEARLY eleven years had elapsed since the Etats Généraux had given the initiative to revolution, when France was mastered by a man capable of ordering the chaos which had borne him. War had justified the fears of Robespierre, and what had successively been dreaded of Lafayette, Dumouriez, Custine, and Hoche, was now at last accomplished by Napoleon Bonaparte. A triumphant soldier had seized the helm of the state, and the constitution of the Year VIII. had invested him with a virtual dictatorship.

Yet the event happened when it was least expected. Having made France greater than it had ever been before, by concluding the peace of Campo Formio, Bonaparte had allayed all suspicion of his designs by departing on his expedition to Egypt.

During his absence the corruption and defective administration of the Directory brought repeated reverses on the armies of the Republic, and caused people to desire a change from the constitution of the Year III. The Abbé Sièyes was known to have excogitated a new scheme, free from all the faults of past experiments ; and the French were only waiting for a man of action to put it into practice. Bonaparte suddenly returned, a hero by report for all, and a partisan foe to none. Unflinching mendacity had concealed the fiasco in Egypt: the confidence in him was unbounded. After some hesitation he agreed to work with the inscrutable theorist, and by a *coup d'état* on Brumaire 18 (November 9), he raised himself to the head of affairs with but little display of that decision and energy which usually distinguished him.\*

When Bonaparte sailed for Egypt he had left a

\* The famous constitution of the Year VIII. was as illusory as it was shortlived. By a triply indirect method of election the people were deprived of all real representation in the government. The men qualified for the executive and legislature were elected by the notables of France, who were elected by the notables of the Communes, the immediately elect of the people. Legislation was performed by three chambers, respectively entrusted with the duties of introducing, discussing, and sanctioning the measures proposed by the executive. A senate of life-members was added to veto all laws repugnant to the constitution. The executive power resided in a First Consul, Bonaparte, who was supported by the advice of two inferior consuls and a Council of State. This executive nominated to all offices, proposed all laws, and appointed the members of the chambers from among the five thousand notables of France. Such was the production of Sièyes' ingenuity, guided by Bonaparte's imperious cunning. The sole material restraint on the First Consul's supremacy was the condition that he held office for no longer than ten years.

congress at Rastadt discussing means for the execution of certain articles in the treaty of Campo Formio which were to establish peace between France and the Empire. The first coalition war against the Revolution was at an end. Prussia had come to separate terms with the French Republic by the peace of Basel in 1795, Spain had even made an alliance with it at St. Ildefonso in 1796, and Tuscany had assumed a submissive attitude. England alone had not laid down arms. As king of Hungary and Bohemia the Emperor had concluded the peace by ceding to France the Austrian possessions in Lombardy and the Netherlands, and consenting to the annexation by the Republic of the Ionian Islands and all the Venetian territory west of the Adige ; while he appropriated Venice itself with its eastern provinces on the mainland. But if the treaty thus secured to Austria in defeat so considerable a satisfaction of its traditional desire for the lands of its decrepit and innocuous neighbour, it did not refuse to victorious France a proportionate gratification in defiance of the rights of the weak. Though openly undertaking to invite the Germans to a congress in order to settle a general peace on the basis of the integrity of the Empire, the Emperor agreed in secret articles to use his influence to procure for the Republic the left bank of the Rhine with the exception of the Prussian provinces, to join with France in obtaining compensation in Germany for those injured by this change, and to contribute no more than his necessary contingent if the war were prolonged. The ratification of these secret provisions had been



extorted from the Congress by threats before Bonaparte had left ; but the question of indemnification had progressed no farther than a decision to secularise the ecclesiastical states for the purpose, when extravagant demands from the French deputies brought negotiation to a deadlock.

Meanwhile, another coalition war had been brewing. Paul I. of Russia had regarded with little pleasure the doings of the Revolution, and when his *protégés*, the knights of St. John of Jerusalem, had been deprived of Malta by Bonaparte on his way to Egypt, when the Directory established by force of arms a Helvetic republic in Switzerland, when it found occasion to carry off the Pope into exile and erect a Roman republic, he abandoned the cautious and self-seeking policy of Catherine, and cordially responded to Pitt's advances for an alliance. At the same time Turkey was compelled by the invasion of Egypt to ally itself for once with Russia. Austria, convinced that the French did not intend to pay a fair price for the treaty of Campo Formio, also determined to renew hostilities ; and Naples, exasperated by the sacrilege of a republic at Rome, and alarmed by French aggressiveness, enrolled itself in the league. The Neapolitan king, indeed, opened the war with some success, before he could receive support from his allies ; but he was soon vanquished by the French, and his dominions were converted into a Parthenopean republic. Austria, on the contrary, awaited the arrival of the Russian forces ; and the general campaign began early in 1799. The French, fighting against such generals as the Archduke Charles and the Russian Suvaroff,

without the supervision of Carnot or the strategy and enterprise of Bonaparte, suffered severe reverses and great privations. Towards the end the Russian army endured much hardship on account of the selfishness of the Austrian cabinet ; and this caused the Tsar, who thought he had other reasons for discontent, to withdraw his troops from the field. When Bonaparte was made First Consul the military position of France was, nevertheless, very precarious. Against it was arrayed a powerful coalition, which at any moment might be rendered irresistible by the return of the army of the capricious Russian autocrat, or by the adhesion of Prussia to the common cause, now that a French alliance appeared less promising. The fragments of its forces were in jeopardy and want. Naples had been abandoned, its king restored, and shameful reprisals had been practised on the republicans who had surrendered to Cardinal Ruffo's " Army of Faith," on condition that their lives and property should be respected. The Roman and Cisalpine republics had fallen. The very congress at Rastadt had been dispersed by the approach of the Austrians ; and the French emissaries had been sabred by Austrian troopers, though how their insolence came to be thus foully punished has never been clearly explained.

At this crisis France was rescued from foreign foes and domestic disorders by its most successful general. But in submitting to a military dictatorship, it adopted something more than a heroic remedy for its misfortunes. It had in truth entered on a new stage of its revolution. It had brought

to an end the turbulent phase of the movement, and had commenced that of consolidation. The man, who now became its absolute ruler, was neither a political sectary nor a partisan of any faction. A Jacobin only when it was unsafe to be anything else, he followed throughout his career with immovable singleness of purpose the principle of personal aggrandisement. For him this motive was such a passion that, paradoxical as it may sound, it took an abstract, almost impersonal, form. To satisfy it, he seized every occasion without regard for any other consideration, and was at once the first and the most successful opportunist in a century which knows few other tactics. With cynical penetration he had discerned the direction which the Revolution was about to take. In 1797 he warned one of the clubs that the time was gone by when lawyers and babblers could guillotine soldiers; and in the previous year he had posed as the mediator between the Revolution and the old interests when he asked the agent of the king of Naples if it was likely that he was fighting for scoundrels of lawyers. His design was to make his own authority supreme by establishing a compromise with the old order on the ruins of faction, or, conversely, to secure tranquillity for France in complete submission to himself.

Accordingly, he assumed the consular office with profuse avowals of disinterested patriotism, and thrilling assurances that all feuds and party strife were at an end. He proclaimed the homogeneity of the nation, and recognised merit as the sole distinction among Frenchmen. Under the one con-

dition of implicit obedience to himself, he inaugurated a new and catholic creed of citizenship. Thus he repealed most of the laws which had been levelled against the royalists, and adopted in their stead conciliatory measures ; but when this policy proved ineffectual, as in Bretagne, where civil war had again broken out, he acted with the severity of outraged law, and entrusted the execution of his behests to a Jacobin like Brune. And while he endeavoured to propitiate the great generals lest they should turn their forces against the new usurpation, he took care that those troops, who were animated by a strong republican spirit, should be sent to perish in Saint Domingo. At the same time every effort was made to convince the country that it had at last obtained a stable and efficient polity without sacrificing the benefits of the new social order. The civil functions of government were discharged with great energy and ability ; the finances were put on a sound footing ; the administration was invested with unity and vigour far transcending the misshapen centralisation of the monarchy ; and the work of legislation was resumed in an active and judicial spirit.

But while Bonaparte strove to conceal from men the fact that France had fallen under the despotism of a military adventurer, he did not forswear the vices which tend to disfigure the best forms of such a political type. In war he had won the allegiance of the French, and he was not the man to seek another basis for his authority. Not only had he good reason to suppose that by the prestige of victory alone could he hold the nation in

obedience for any length of time, but his fundamental inclinations were towards wars of vulgar conquest. As early as 1796, he had promised his soldiers plunder, as well as glory and honour, in the fertile plains and great towns of Italy. He had been at once the most active creator of client republics, and the most contemptuous despoiler of their goods and liberty. Hence, though he excited the hopes of the exhausted country by pacific protestations, he untiringly prepared in secret for the continuation of the war. As precautionary measures, he prevailed upon Prussia to maintain its neutrality; and he deftly converted the Tsar's exasperation against the greed of his allies into a friendly feeling for the new government, which seemed to have crushed the Revolution. Further, to sustain his peaceful professions, he wrote to the Emperor and the King of England, warmly urging an immediate pacification. But his advances were received in these quarters with disdain, and he had the gratification of obtaining war without incurring the opprobrium of aggression.

In the campaign which followed, France obtained signal satisfaction for its chagrin. Leaving Moreau to carry the war into Germany, Bonaparte suddenly crossed the Alps, and defeated the Austrians on the plain of Marengo. The Austrians, though completely cowed, refrained from concluding a definite peace out of respect for their engagements with England; and armistices, expiring into desultory warfare, prolonged the contest till Moreau laid the way open to Vienna, by winning a splendid triumph at Hohenlinden.

A treaty of peace was finally concluded at Lunéville, when Francis II. pledged the Empire to its provisions on the ground of the consents already given at Rastadt. In conformity with the treaty of Campo Formio, Austria retained the boundary of the Adige in Italy; France kept Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine; and the princes, dispossessed by the cessions, were promised compensation in Germany; while Tuscany was given to France to sell to Spain at the price of Parma, Louisiana, six ships of the line, and a sum of money. Shortly afterwards peace was extended to Naples on easy terms.

The glory of this war, however, was dimmed by two vexatious disappointments before France could pretend to be at peace with all the world. England's high-handed dealings in maritime warfare had long been a matter of complaint among powers, who were in no position to contest British supremacy on the sea; but never had they excited so much bitterness as during the war with revolutionary France. The dispute occasioned much unscrupulous conduct on both sides, to the severe injury of neutrals; and a defensive alliance between Sweden and Denmark for the protection of their commerce secured the adhesion of Russia and Prussia. These four powers agreed to revive the Armed Neutrality of the North of 1780; but the English Government took the proceeding as a declaration of war, and immediately prepared to attack the allies before they could combine their forces. A fleet was despatched to Copenhagen, where Nelson, as Englishmen love to remember,

ignored the dangers of the passage, and the commands of his timorous\* superior in a desperate, but successful, conflict with the Danish ships and batteries. The intention to visit Sweden in the same manner was dissipated by the death of the most powerful and violent member of the league. Against the insane extravagances and whims, with which the Tsar tormented all who came near him, Russia had exercised the only limiting condition in its autocratic constitution. Paul had been assassinated by a palace conspiracy; and Alexander I. had succeeded to the throne, amid the open joy of court and country at the announcement that his father had died of apoplexy. The new Tsar, being forced by the peculiar circumstances of his accession to avoid offending any section of the court, and conscious that England's commerce was more advantageous to Russia than its naval usages were injurious, forthwith proposed a peaceful solution of the dispute; and the remaining parties to the alliance were compelled to acquiesce. At a congress at St. Petersburg, Russia agreed to the principle that the flag does not cover the goods, and that vessels under convoy may be visited except by privateers; while England renounced paper blockades, and admitted that henceforth only articles employed directly in war were to be contraband.† About the same time the French army in Egypt, having suffered many losses and privations since the desertion of its

\* Though according to some testimony we should add "generous."—*Croker's "Correspondence,"* i., 50.

† The general resentment against England's maritime policy

chief, capitulated to the English, on condition that they received a free passage to Toulon. Meanwhile, a change of ministry in England had prepared the way for the conclusion of a general peace.

Since 1782, Ireland had been legislatively and judicially independent. Threats of rebellion, supported by an army of volunteers, had compelled England to abandon every tie with it, save that sustained by the king in his capacity of constitutional sovereign of both islands. But the folly and corruption which controlled Irish affairs in the exercise of this independence, the insurrection of 1798, and the difference between the two governments on the question of the Regency, when disease had rendered the king incapable of ruling, convinced England that a re-union was imperative. By lavish bribery the Protestant oligarchy of the Irish Government was induced to relinquish what it regarded as a vested interest, and to acquiesce in a bill for the union of Ireland with England, on the basis of a proportionate representation at Westminster.

The belief that Catholic Emancipation was an integral portion of Pitt's design, had obtained the

at this time found lasting expression in Schiller's poem, *Der Antritt des Neuen Jahrhunderts*.

“Seine Handelsflotten streckt der Britte  
Gierig wie Polypenarme aus,  
Und das Reich der freien Amphitrite  
Will er schliessen, wie sein eignes Haus.  
Zu des Südpols nie erblickten Sternen  
Dringt sein rastlos ungehemmter Lauf;  
Alle Inseln spürt er, alle fernen  
Küsten—nur das Paradies nicht auf.”



tacit consent of the Catholic masses to the change. Nor was this confidence in the minister misplaced. But George III. could not be induced to admit the Catholics to the rights and privileges of citizenship. Possessed with an erroneous notion, probably first enunciated in Parliament in 1772 during the debate on the subscription to the Articles,\* he clung with childish passion to a belief, that concessions to the Catholics would change the character of the Established Church, and would thus be a violation of his coronation oath. Pitt was consequently obliged to resign, and with him went the policy of inflexible resistance to French encroachments.

He was succeeded by Addington, whose ministry immediately began to treat for peace,—an excusable weakness when the Revolution seemed to have been withstood effectually by England, and to be repressed permanently under Bonaparte's despotism, when even Pitt appears to have thought that the ambition of this man was at length satisfied, and when the country's exertions, and its frequent subsidies to other nations, had already accumulated a third of that six hundred millions of debt, which was contracted before peace was durably established. Hence came about the peace of Amiens, by which England engaged to restore all its colonial conquests with the exception of Ceylon, ceded to it by the Dutch, and of Trinidad, relinquished by Spain; to restore Malta to the knights; and to evacuate all the harbours and

\* It was then met by a strenuous protest on the part of Burke, though he was himself in favour of subscription.

islands occupied in the Mediterranean. France, on the other hand, promised to evacuate Southern Italy. Fabricated from sheer weariness of spirit, the treaty gave little satisfaction to the most sanguine, while to the suspicious it was but a clumsily contrived armistice of no long duration.

The time was now come for the Revolution to complete the ruin of the Holy Roman Empire. Pursuant to the treaty of Lunéville, the German Diet met at Regensburg to discuss a scheme of compensation for the dispossessed rulers. Virtually the meeting was a renewal of the congress of Rastadt. Almost the same business was its object, and only a more pronounced profligacy of method distinguished it from the earlier assembly. After much debate a committee of eight members was appointed "to settle in conjunction with the French government the details reserved in the Peace of Lunéville for special agreement;" but its functions were even more formal than those of the futile congress. At Rastadt the incoherence and disintegration of the venerable Empire had become painfully apparent. The feud of the Reformation had at once loosened its members and made them more monarchical and ambitious; while its want of solidarity had since been steadily increased by the jealousy between the new Prussian State and the ancient House of Austria, and by the apprehension constantly felt by the smaller states lest they should fall victims to either of these great monarchies. When, therefore, the traitorous conduct of the Emperor at Campo Formio was disclosed at Rastadt,—when it was

known that the head of the nation, who had guaranteed the integrity of the Empire in the preliminaries of Leoben, and had renewed the assurance when he convoked the assembly, had in truth betrayed to the stranger nearly all the left bank of the Rhine,—the German rulers greedily hastened to secure every possible trifle in the scramble of redistribution. The slow and wearisome debates were supplemented by intrigues of the most degraded nature. Conscious that the French Consul could give a casting vote on any disputed question, the princes found no indignity too shameful, no trick too base, to obtain his favour.

With the peace of Lunéville these proceedings were renewed, and while Regensburg was the seat of the ostensible debate, Paris was the real theatre of contention. So little did Bonaparte's repeated conquests awaken the patriotic apprehensions and personal suspicions of the German rulers, that the pause which had given him new victories and fresh opportunities for exaction, only imparted to the shameful traffic such additional briskness as familiarity invited at the prospect of greater disposable booty and greater dispensing authority in the hands of the French dictator. Nor were the princes alone in being well pleased to make profit out of the misfortunes of the Fatherland by means of French intervention. Their subjects were also generally desirous of pursuing the same policy. They thought it good to court the great man of the age. Hero-worship exhibited its most detestable aspect: it turned self-interest into grovelling

dependence, and obliterated all traces of national self-respect. Deceived by those diabolical half-truths, as Von Treitschke calls them, which Bonaparte could so well manipulate, the peoples sanctioned, as plainly as they usually expressed themselves on political matters, the unprincipled and shortsighted conduct of their rulers.

The First Consul, on his side, prosecuted with a duplicity and address, heretofore unequalled, the traditional policy of France in German affairs. Never weary of declaring his disinterestedness, his zeal for the well-being of Germany, and his sincere desire for peace and concord, he brought the suppliant princes to separate treaties with France, and by territorial adjustments formed of them powers which were no powers without him, gave them ambitions which he alone could satisfy, and, in a word, made of them duteous vassals to himself. Feigning to take into his counsels the young Tsar, whose convenient friendship was thus easily obtained on account of his family connections with the German courts, he drew up a scheme of indemnification, and presented it to the Diet for endorsement. In due time a servile assent was given to every point which concerned the two autocrats. By this settlement, Austria and Prussia were more equally balanced against one another, the former being deprived of influence in Western Germany, and the latter finding in more convenient situations a rich recompense for its cessions on the Rhine; while the middle states, Bavaria, Baden, and Würtemberg, received very considerable accessions of territory.

But if Bonaparte dislocated yet further the political structure of Germany, he was at least instrumental in removing the worst of the anachronisms which stifled the development of improved institutions among a large division of its people.

The same measure which brought German separatism to a climax, also extinguished the ecclesiastical sovereignties and nearly all the free cities. That these strongholds of priestly obscurantism and bourgeois apathy would some day be invaded by their more ambitious and active neighbours, had long been apparent. Such a change was, in fact, an integral condition of the process which was imparting increased energy and sense to German public life. Till an end was made of the worldly citadels of Catholicism, it was impossible for the Protestants legally to affirm in the affairs of the Empire the influence to which their numbers, civilisation, and power entitled them; till the misrule of priestly courts was exchanged for the government of a secular state, the sustained introduction of modern reform was denied to many a German district; and till the bishoprics and free cities had sacrificed the monotonous routine of their petty independence by participating in the interests and anxieties of a modern polity, national spirit and a worthy conception of citizenship were not to be looked for among many of the mercantile and professional classes.

Yet more contemptuous of national rights were the means taken by the First Consul to extend his power over Holland, Italy, and Switzerland.

The United Provinces now formed what was called a Batavian Republic in dependence on France. Smitten with civil strife before the revolutionary movement took shape, the country, so long the retreat of liberty on the continent, had fallen an easy prey to Jacobin anarchy. Circumstances had drawn discontented Holland closely towards its powerful neighbour when the Revolution commenced. In the conflict between the Stadtholderate and the mercantile aristocracy, the latter had espoused French ideas and tastes in opposition to its antagonist's conservative and English sympathies. By the degeneracy of the government the popular element in the Orange party had been greatly reduced, while the democratic burghers had received corresponding support from the people. More recently, heightened animosity of the country against England, the inheritor of its prosperity and the persecutor of its marine, had increased disaffection towards the Stadtholder and friendly feeling towards France; and when rebellion broke out against the Prince of Orange and his advisers, and the King of Prussia took occasion to intervene, it was on French help that the Dutch people relied, as they had done shortly before against the menaces of Joseph II. But what the French monarchy found it necessary to forego, the French Republic found it imperative to undertake. The overthrow of the Stadtholder was not to be renounced by the revolutionary government because the Prussian king was jealous of the rights of his relatives, or because the English government made common

cause with the Orange party; nor from fear lest a war in behalf of Dutch democrats would be expensive. Refugees from Holland and Belgium had done good work for anarchy at the beginning of the Revolution, and from the first many leading Frenchmen had plotted to reciprocate the service; the riches of the Netherlands were a tempting booty to the needy administrators of Paris; and their situation was eminently favourable for extending the war against Europe. The allies were driven out of Holland, the Stadtholder put to flight, and a Batavian republic was erected, which, closely modelled after the French type, supported by French arms, and afflicted by Jacobin exactions, welded the old historic provinces into a single fief of France. Changing with every change in the French government, the Dutch administration had to submit to the new conditions of the Consulate, and its democratic constitution was exchanged by Bonaparte for one more amenable to his personal control.

It has already been stated that the Belgian Netherlands were directly incorporated into France; but it is worth noting in this connection by what curious inversion these old-fashioned provinces of Austria became prepared for a change so much more far-reaching than any of their former numerous vicissitudes. Of the Austrian possessions, Belgium retained perhaps the fullest enjoyment of ancient institutions when Joseph II. began his attempt to establish uniformity and efficiency throughout his dominions, and discovered that nowhere did greater confusion and ignorance

prevail than in his priest-ridden conservative Netherlands. Nor were these the only obstacles he had to combat. Against his innovations a democratic party contended along with the upholders of the traditional order. The near influence of France had created a number of democrats who were eager to attack the existing government because it was not republican ; and when Joseph provoked by his reforms a revolt of the Ultramontanes, they readily seized the opportunity for insurrection. But as soon as the Austrian government had been overthrown the two parties came into conflict with one another, and enabled the politic Leopold to assert his authority over the rebellious provinces. Yet the democratic feeling, which had gained decided utterance during the contest of a reforming monarch with stubborn sacerdotalism, did not at once subside ; and its force was both attested and augmented by the insurrection in the neighbouring bishopric of Liège. Hence there were many active partisans of the French to greet the armies of the Republic, when once again this well-trod battlefield became the seat of war ; and, though the depredations of the so-called deliverers soon brought repentance, it was not without some colour of truth that the Convention declared Belgium and Liège to be annexed to France with the consent of their inhabitants.

While the metamorphosis of the Netherlands was only in a measure imposed from without, the affiliation of a republican Italy to revolutionary France was entirely a French achievement. Nay, it was



distinctively Bonaparte's work. The emancipation of Italy from alien bondage had, it is true, been much talked of at Paris, and the Italians had been deemed ripe for liberty, long before Bonaparte appeared as a conqueror beyond the Alps. But when the opportunity for reorganising the government of the Peninsula arrived, the Directory thought only of using it as a means of extortion or a ground of diplomatic negotiation; and Bonaparte needed all his arbitrary obstinacy to be able to shape his Italian conquests into republican dependencies of France. In them he saw the possibility of creating a principality worthy of his fame. From them he hoped to construct a state which should command the most valuable resources of the Peninsula and look to him as its founder and protector. He had sanctioned the agitation of Piedmontese, Genoese, and Cisalpine patriots in order to veil his own usurpations;\* but when he became First Consul no scruple withheld him from dissipating the hopes of autonomy with which he had beguiled them. The Cisalpine republic was now the embodiment of French rule in Italy. It had begun as the Cispadane republic in 1796 from the duchy of Modena and part of the Papal States; and had finally been completed by the addition of the Austrian and Venetian lands gained at Campo Formio. In the beginning of 1802 a large body of deputies obeyed a summons to France to confer with Bonaparte respecting a new constitution for the republic. There they accepted the scheme already drawn up for them, and followed unmistakable injunctions

\* Cf. Lanfrey, *History of Napoleon I.* (Eng. Trans.), i., 241.

to elect Bonaparte for the head of what was now sententiously termed the Italian republic. Soon afterwards Piedmont, whose king had been driven away to Sardinia, was formally annexed to France; Parma practically shared the same fate, while Tuscany, though nominally ruled by the prince of Parma, confessedly acknowledged Bonaparte as suzerain.

The fall of the Dutch republic may be said to have revealed the spurious character of Jacobin freedom. In a like sense the collapse of the Swiss Confederation bore testimony to the timeliness of the Revolution. In a country habituated to self-government, nourished on the traditions of liberty, and peculiarly invulnerable to violence or corruption from without, the French Revolution could evoke but slight response unless the existing order were really disfigured by serious evils. Yet in Switzerland hopes for redress of popular grievances were perhaps as rife as in any country in Europe, with the exception of France, when the reign of the rights of man was announced. So unfeeling and harsh had been the conduct of the superior democracies towards their dependants; so exclusive and despotic had become the dominant parties in the cantons; so abundant were the restrictions, monopolies, and distinctions which clung around the modern society; that the thought of a revision of all institutions according to the dictates of natural equality produced a ferment in urban and forest cantons alike. Throughout the eighteenth century, this craving for reform had found expression in the civil strifes of Geneva, where culture and wealth rendered especially unendurable the

privileges of an oligarchy; and here of course the example of France first incited disturbances. But other towns and many country districts were not slow to assert their grievances; disorder became general; the French fomented discord, and gained many partisans by intrigue; and finally they succeeded by force and fraud in overthrowing the federal constitution and erecting in its stead a single and indivisible republic. But the French principles of democratic centralisation commended themselves only to certain cliques and parties in the towns, and were far from corresponding with the wants of the more primitive Swiss, who were loth to sacrifice their ancient local independence. The Helvetic republic mocked the simple hopes for better distributed freedom which had prompted much of the rebellion against the old order. Rent by civil war, and held asunder by a fundamental difference of purpose, it remained in the power of the tempter, and forfeited to France its blood, its wealth, and liberty. Bonaparte forbore not from using the dissensions of Switzerland as a pretext for intervention, but when he stepped in as a mediator between the rival parties he contented himself with the control of the central authority. For the rest, he enforced a compromise with the Federalists which restored peace to the Republic, and, in exchange for sundry concessions to his military requirements, he protected the country from many of those troubles which the ensuing years of war heaped upon central Europe.

With equal directness and vigour did Bonaparte develop in France his policy of making every

remedial measure, every instrument of government, every active force, an emanation from his own will. He instituted the Legion of Honour to reward those who most industriously served him; his sycophants caused the Consulship to be assured to him for life; and the irresponsible functions of the office were so increased by changes in the constitution that only a formal declaration of the sacred and hereditary nature of his dignity was wanted to vest in him the imperial power. Most significant was his settlement of the religious schism which by this time, like every other passion of the Revolution, had spent all its original fury. Restoring to the Catholic priesthood the position of a national church, he organised it into a hierarchy, strictly subordinate to himself, yet exercising all the influence of the clergy of Rome. The character of the new Pope greatly facilitated the introduction of such a measure. Though the successor of Pius VI., who had been persecuted by the Republic and had died in exile and duress, Pius VII. had displayed both as bishop of Imola and as Pope extraordinary toleration of the Revolution; and now that the movement seemed to be approaching a settled issue, he showed much anxiety to re-establish the Papal power in harmony with the new conditions. With him Bonaparte concluded a concordat by which the Free Constitutional Church of France was suppressed, and the Papal authority was made absolute, while the nomination of the bishops was given to the First Consul, and all decrees from the court of Rome were subjected to the censure of the government.

This agreement was based on the proposition, "la religion catholique est la religion de la grande majorité du peuple françois," \* and the French Protestants feared that their numerical inferiority might be held to deprive of protection the religious freedom which they had recently enjoyed. Bonaparte, however, was inclined to treat them with favour, and gave them a satisfactory constitutional status. The result was that, owing to the tolerant spirit proceeding from the indifference of reaction, a remarkable cordiality subsisted between all religious confessions in France during his rule. In Germany, too, where men had already been diverted from attaching much importance to dogmatic theology by the spirit of the Revolution, and the new indigenous culture, Bonaparte helped to induce a more tolerant feeling than had prevailed since the Peace of Westphalia by disregarding religious differences in the redistribution of Protestant and Catholic territories, and by proclaiming in the act of the Rheinbund the civil equality of both creeds.† Against this temporary good must be placed the more enduring evil of turning religion into the instrument of a secular system, and making its service to political discipline its only claim to consideration from the state. Bonaparte took care to get the utmost from his bargain with the Pope. He lost no opportunity of using his authority to convert the priesthood into apostles of his own despotic cult; and he added to the sceptic's doctrine that the fiction of a God is a necessity for society,

\* Martens, "*Recueil des Principaux Traités*," etc., vii., 353.

† Cf. Bauer, "*Gesch. der Christlichen Kirche*," v., 24-30.

the tyrant's confession that the hirelings of an infallible Church are the best defenders of an usurper's power. His servile clergy unblushingly declared the sacred nature of his mission ; they consented to the ludicrous blasphemy of his imperial catechism ; and taught that submission to his taxes and conscription was almost co-extensive with the whole duty of man.

To the Papacy, on the other hand, these dealings with Bonaparte brought for the present but mortification and distress. In a subsequent epoch the Pontifical influence was vastly increased by the ultramontane sacerdotalism which, as commonly happens in such cases, was evoked by the humiliation of the clergy in France and the extinction of the ecclesiastical foundations in Germany.\* Then the concessions of Bonaparte to Pius VII. became

\* It is worth noting that in Germany in the last century allegiance to Rome was maintained only through the fear of the bishops, lest they might be placed at the mercy of their superiors. When Joseph II. came to the throne, and issued his edict against the Papal power and ecclesiastical independence, the German archbishops proposed to carry out a scheme, which for some years they had been contemplating. In 1763, the bishop of Treves, under the name of Febronius, had published his famous treatise demonstrating that the pseudo-Isidorian decretals were the principal support of the later pretensions of Rome. In 1786, in the famous "Emser Punktation," the Archbishops asserted that the Pope, though possessing a supervisory power, had no right to supplant the bishops in administrative matters, nor claim to appropriate Peter's pence, etc. ; but that such affairs, and the business of ecclesiastical discipline, should be placed in the hands of a national synod. Joseph, however, though implacable towards conventualism, intolerance, and the civil authority of the Papacy, would not consent to such changes till the bishops gave in their adherence ; and as these suspected that a reproduction in Germany of the Gallican Church would

sources of new power to Rome, and greatly helped to prop up the principle of authority which the progress of European development appeared to have overthrown. But while Bonaparte presided over the execution of the compact, nought but bitter disappointment and brutal misuse rewarded the Pope's repeated and undignified efforts to appease the new Charlemagne.

To a somewhat different category belongs the Civil Code. Though Bonaparte undoubtedly regarded the legislator's renown as a necessary component of his authority, his codification of the law was free from those Machiavellian distortions which marred too many of his undertakings; and it was removed by some distance from those achievements which, like the Bank of France, were so obviously designed for supports to the Consular Government that their purely business nature does not except them from his general scheme of self-aggrandisement. His motive, nevertheless, was of the usual character. As the reckless fiscal policy of his predecessors had inclined people to be strongly prepossessed in favour of any ruler who had the aspect of a severe financier,\* so the chaotic

make them too dependent on the ecclesiastical princes, they refused to acquiesce in resistance to the papal pretensions, notwithstanding the spurious nature of the pseudo-Isidorian decretals.—See Bierdermann, "*Deutschland im achtzehnten Jahrhundert*," ii. Theil, p. 1102.

\* "On avait," says Michelet, "tant parlé de *déficit* et accusé le Directoire que tout le monde désirait que le premier magistrat fût un comptable sévère, un calculateur intraitable. Sa sèche figure y prêtait. Plusieurs de ses portraits d'alors sont ceux qu'on imaginerait pour un avare, il ne négligeait rien pour obtenir cette réputation d'âpre dispensateur de la fortune publique. Il

state of the French law had raised a general demand for its systematisation, the immediate satisfaction of which, he perceived, would bring him great accession of confidence and prestige. Indeed, Voltaire had been able to say that a traveller through France changed his laws as often as he changed his post-horses; and the Constituent Assembly, the Convention, and the Directory had all in turn taken steps towards the formation of a code. The completion of the task Bonaparte secured by appointing a commission of trained lawyers to throw into shape the different chapters, which were then discussed by the Council of State, the Tribunate, and the Legislative Body. As one among others Bonaparte diligently criticised and amended, as head of the state he published the law-book thus compiled; but never with others would he share the honour of giving to France a system of practical jurisprudence; and when he became emperor and was beyond reach of the claims of his colleagues he formally adopted the work as his own by changing its name of the *Code Civil* into that of the *Code Napoléon*. Nor did he err in seeking by this means to find a place in the memory of posterity. Succeeding generations, even when made aware that his pretensions were excessive, have consented to tolerate the ambition of the great soldier for legislative fame, and have continued to call the code, which he fathered, by the name he chose for a lasting memorial to himself.

faisait croire que malgré tant d'occupations, il refaisait les comptes, les calculs, découvrait des erreurs dans les additions."—  
*"Histoire du XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle,"* iii., 8.



The substance of the code consists partly of Roman law, partly of customary law, and partly of the ordinances of the kings and of the laws of the Revolution. Haste and insufficient erudition diminished its efficiency; want of definitions of technical terms, absence of a method of distinction, omission to enunciate the broad principles underlying its details, gave it a fallacious brevity; neglect to provide for the incorporation of judiciary law prevented it from meeting the demands of experience and of time; but its shortcomings have not prevented it from being of immense practical service to the people, and a very instructive example to all who consider the problems of codification.\* From the point of view of general history it has been yet more illustrious. It was founded on the principle of the equality of all men before the law,—the grand truth enunciated once for all by the Revolution. Carried wherever the French armies penetrated, it was often retained when they were driven away. Thus the equitable code was at once the most potent evangelist of the Revolution, and the most lasting benefit conferred by France on the subject nations.

The interval of peace occupied by these events did not last long. When the peace of Amiens was yet unconcluded, the high-handed proceedings of Bonaparte on the continent aroused the indignation of Great Britain; and when Piedmont was annexed and Switzerland invaded, Addington's government, though desirous of giving the peace every chance of life, took up a menacing position.

\* Cf. Austin, "Lectures on Jurisprudence," Lect. xxxix.

The publication of a French commercial report on Egypt, which made threatening remarks on the English situation in the East, then led them to a breach of contract hardly reprehensible at such a crisis. They refused to evacuate Malta. Unfortunately the peace had been so contrived, that their expostulations with French aggression had to be administered in the form of weak sophisms; and it was evident, from the beginning of the dispute, that Great Britain's sole remedy was war, which it could ill justify by explicit formulæ. An ultimatum, therefore, as repugnant to the last treaty of peace as it was unacceptable, was tendered to the Consular Government; and war was declared when thousands of British subjects visiting France had already been ensnared and imprisoned.

At first the war promised to be a duel *à outrance*. With all his wonderful promptness and energy Bonaparte prepared to invade this obdurate country. Opposite its shores he collected and trained an army, the efficiency of which has probably never been surpassed in modern times, and no device was spared to induce the French to make a grand and sustained effort; while British patriotism, fired by the sight of the army of England, with all its appliances for invasion, hastened with ardour to meet the threatened irruption. Bonaparte, aware of the perils which an attack would encounter by land and sea, deferred making any attempt till his preparations were complete. In the meantime he seized the luckless Hanover on the ground that it was an English province,

because George III. was its Elector. He moved troops into Naples. He thrust Holland into the war, and ordered the arrest of all English therein discoverable. He closed the mouth of the Elbe against British commerce with Germany, and took no notice of England's retaliatory blockade against the trade of all nations through the Elbe and the Weser. He wrung large contributions of money from Spain and Portugal, and he sold Louisiana to America, notwithstanding an engagement to give Spain the refusal of it.

But before his project of invasion was shattered by maritime disaster and continental war, Bonaparte assumed the imperial dignity. A futile Bourbon conspiracy afforded a pretext for his obedient creatures in the Senate to propose that France should be protected from further political catastrophes, by conversion of the Consulate into a hereditary throne. So completely had he subdued the different bodies of the original constitution, and the whole official hierarchy, so much popularity had the peace and the war given him, so implicitly was he believed to have bestowed glory and prosperity on France, that he found it unnecessary to incur the odium of another usurpation. Giving manifold indications of the aim he had in view, he was content to leave the initiative to men like Fouché, and the decision to that part of the people which his bureaucracy permitted to personate the nation. None the less, however, did he emphasise the autocratic character of his rule. At his coronation, the world was studiously reminded that on that day an emperor

indeed was enthroned. The last semblances of democratic government vanished. The republican calendar was abandoned, a new nobility was created, the old aristocracy was welcomed back, and all the ceremonial observances of an imperial court were instituted. The press, which had been grievously reduced by the Consular government, was deprived of all connection with public opinion. Individuals were more than ever prohibited from discussing matters of state; and those studies, which form the best part of a liberal culture, were proscribed alike in the *salons*, the schools, and the Institute.

Among other discreditable deeds, which he committed on the occasion of the royalist conspiracy, Napoleon seized the innocent Duc d'Enghien in the neutral territory of Baden, and shot him, as a ransom for the royal conspirators whom he could not entice from England. The Tsar had remonstrated in vain with Napoleon's infringements of the treaty of Lunéville, and when he heard of this brutal breach of international law, he lost no time in expressing his indignation. A reference to the circumstances of Alexander's own accession to the throne served the French for repartee, and rendered a rupture inevitable. Meanwhile Pitt had taken the conduct of the war out of the hands of Addington's feeble ministry. Possessing the confidence of the powers, he rapidly concluded offensive alliances with Russia, Sweden, and Austria, though Prussia obstinately remained neutral. Thus, by 1805, Napoleon had put to hazard all his lately won power in a conflict with the greater part of Europe.

The allies sought to veil the genesis of their coalition in secrecy, and it was with great discomfiture that they saw the camp of Boulogne suddenly break up, and the army, till then destined to conquer England, move with the utmost precision and speed into Germany. But though Napoleon was prepared betimes to change his plan of operations, he did not avoid jeopardising his fleet as if the invasion were really to be carried out; and the battle of Cape Trafalgar crushed for good his maritime power, and rendered England safe from direct attack. The campaign on land, however, made him master of central Europe. Bringing the Austrian army in Germany to an inglorious capitulation at Ulm, he marched through Vienna, and, with inferior forces, won in his best style the battle of Austerlitz against the troops of Francis and Alexander. The action was decisive. The allies thought not of renewing the war with the relays of troops which were hurrying up from North and South. Russian and Austrian alike wished to be rid of their ill-fated connection. The Emperor Alexander silently returned home, pursued only by Napoleon's flattering tokens of esteem; the Emperor Francis accepted the peace of Presburg, which deprived his house of the ill-gotten Venetian States, Tyrol, and its more distant possessions in Western Germany; the King of Prussia, who had been on the point of joining the coalition with a large army if his mediation were unsuccessful, was committed to an alliance with the conqueror by his terrified negotiator. And well did Napoleon appear to make the fruits of victory compensate

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France for its exertions. The empire was not made more unwieldy in bulk, but its dependants, Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Baden, received considerable accessions of territory, and the two first were raised to the rank of kingdoms; while the Emperor's Italian principality, which he had already turned into a kingdom of Italy to the great disgust of Austria, was increased by the addition of the ceded Venetian lands.

But the full depth of Europe's humiliation was not experienced till the two following years. In 1806 an Act of Federation was signed by the kings of Bavaria and Würtemberg, the Elector of Baden, and thirteen minor princes, which united them into a league under the protection of the French Emperor. The objects of this confederacy, known as the Rheinbund, were defence against foreign aggression and the exercise of complete autonomy at home. The first of these was obtained by an alliance with Napoleon, in exchange for which they agreed to support him in all his wars and to place their troops at his disposal; the second was achieved by a declared secession from the Empire, and the annexation of those petty principalities which, hitherto immediately dependent on the imperial constitution, abounded in great numbers throughout Germany. Already the consequences of the Peace of Lunéville had induced the ruling Hapsburg to assure his equality with the sovereigns of France and Russia by taking the imperial title in his own right; and before the Confederation of the Rhine was made public he formally renounced his office of elective Emperor of the Holy Roman

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Empire, and released from allegiance to him all the states and princes of the Reich. The triumph of the German policy of the Consulate was complete.\*

The one German power which remained to dispute Napoleon's supremacy in Central Europe was now crushed with every extreme of contumely. Prussia, treated alternately with contempt and friendly importunity, had in the late war almost yielded to the bribe of Hanover as the price of an offensive alliance with France; and it was only when Bernadotte violated the neutrality of Anspach and revealed the estimation in which Napoleon held the country of Frederick the Great, that it resolved to depart from its neutral position, and preparations for a possible war were set on foot. By a treaty made at Potsdam early in November, Frederick William promised to join the coalition if a last summons to Napoleon to surrender the crown of Italy, and to evacuate Piedmont, Switzerland, and Holland, should prove unavailing. Haugwitz, the diplomatist charged with the delivery of the summons at the French camp, was, however, the blindest and most irresolute of the many incapable Prussian officials of that time. Eluded by Napoleon till Austerlitz had been fought and won, he was thrown into such a state of trepidation by the defeat of the Allies that he forgot his instructions and the apprehensions prevalent at Berlin; he

\* Napoleon thus got the use of nearly 70,000 German soldiers, a number which was eventually increased by the admittance of new members to the Bund to more than 120,000; and nearly fifteen millions of Germans were taught to look to Paris as their national centre.

congratulated Napoleon on his victory, averred that Prussia was longing for an alliance with France, and eagerly concluded the same in consideration of the gift of Hanover. Napoleon, though he was acquainted with the original terms which Haugwitz had been sent to offer, and received his congratulations with an ominous acknowledgment, was well content to accept the assurances of friendship and to enter into the alliance. Let only the Prussian state be convicted of robbing a near neighbour through the bounty of a French dictator, and nothing, he knew, could save it from his grasp. Berlin at first was thunderstruck by the sudden reversal of its plans; but gradually the perils of the situation overcame the regrets of conscience, and the king decided to ratify Haugwitz's treaty.

War with England and Sweden, and the destruction of its merchant shipping, were the first wages of Prussia's perfidy. Yet the measure of its abasement was still far from filled. The news of Austerlitz had proved fatal to the enfeebled constitution of Pitt, and the difficulties of the time had led to a union of parties, generally known as the Talents Administration, with Fox for foreign secretary. The generous faith in the Revolution, which distinguished Fox, made Napoleon believe that England would soon open negotiations for peace. Nor was his surmise incorrect, but he miscalculated the pliancy of the friendly Englishman, and the discussion was brought to nought by the overreaching tactics of the French diplomacy. The negotiations, however, lasted long enough for the parties to agree on the condition that Hanover



should be restored to George III. Accidentally the Prussian ambassador at Paris discovered the fact. The intelligence ought not to have taken by surprise a power, to which Napoleon had once offered Hamburg at the same moment that he was trying to extort from that city several millions as the price of a fuller reconciliation with France; but, coming as it did after much insupportable bullying, the news precipitated in Prussia the repentance of reaction, brought the war party to the front, and called forth the immediate mobilisation of the army. Napoleon, warned of the impending storm by opening the despatch of the Prussian ambassador, held his army in readiness to strike at the instant war was declared. Isolated in its humiliation, alone in its rebellion, with its army lately placed on a peace footing, the wretched Prussia had chosen a most unfortunate moment to fight for what was left of its self-respect. For a few weeks the deluded state worked at its preparations in the belief that its enemy was unaware of what was threatening; and then sent an ultimatum to Paris. In vain peace was made with Sweden, and England was conciliated; in vain the assistance of the distant Tsar was implored and promised. There was only time to obtain by force a Saxon contingent before Prussia had to meet its swift and mighty adversary. The Prussian army was deficient in everything requisite for the new warfare. Sixty-five years earlier it had established its reputation at the battle of Mollwitz by the extraordinary rapidity of its fire and the precision of its manœuvres. Now it was stricken with all the in-

firmities of age in system, equipment, and officers. The unobservant world, however, believed it to be still a perfect engine of its type; and great was the amazement when it was completely outmanœuvred by the French Emperor, and as completely defeated at Jena and Auerstadt on the same day.

Prussia fell to the ground. The moral feebleness of the administration seemed to have spread through the army and nation. The people, expropriated by class-divisions, filled with hatred of the insolent and licentious nobility and soldiery, appeared to care little for their army's destruction, and complacently witnessed Napoleon's administration of the country he had conquered. And in the army, wherever responsibility lay, there the incapacity and cowardice of old age was almost uniformly manifested; and the fortresses, which might have detained the enemy till the Russian army arrived, vied with each other in their promptness to capitulate at the presence of the French. Happily for the future of Europe some indications of a brighter time relieved the gloom. The Queen Louise, whose memory is still fondly cherished in Germany, headed a revolt against craven submissiveness; the younger soldiers vented mutinous protests against the traitorous timidity of their superiors; and in Blücher's desperate struggles and Gneisenau's defence of Kolberg, in the counsels of Stein and the thoughts of Fichte, lingered a spirit becoming to the state which was founded by the Great Elector and exalted by the second Fritz.

The panic of the garrisons caused the conqueror

to insist on such ruinous terms that Frederick William despairingly determined to let Alexander's troops contest the small portion of territory remaining to him. The climate and roads of Prussian Poland being very unfavourable to Napoleon's rapid strategy, no decisive action redeemed the bloody repulse at Eylau till the battle of Friedland in June, 1807. Hereupon an armistice followed, and then a peace—a peace only less pernicious and sensational than war itself. Within a fortnight of his defeat Alexander forgot his devotion to Frederick William, and repented of having incurred disasters like Austerlitz and Friedland in the quarrels of others. Nay, he surrendered himself to the fascinations of Napoleon and abandoned Prussia to its fate. Granted two interviews on a raft moored in the middle of the Memel, he was induced by his conqueror's blandishments to desert the cause of Europe, and become a party to Napoleon's schemes of universal conquest. Tilsit was chosen for the theatre of a debate on an immediate peace; and the bargain struck on the Memel was there pursued to its remotest consequences.

With the seduction of the Tsar Napoleon seemed to have vanquished all resistance in continental Europe. In truth, however, the Peace of Tilsit was the most fatal of his victories, and was rather a malignant crisis in the fever of his ambition than a real advance in the extension of his supremacy. Till then the tenor of his ambition, though poised with uncertain balance between the bold and the visionary, had never actually abandoned

the region of the practicable or forsaken the path of deliberate calculation. Till then his challenges had been directed at monarchs who could be cajoled in misfortune and appeased in success, to governments as capable of treason to themselves as they were sordid in their conscious aims. Never had he defied implacable resentment or enduring opposition ; never had he provoked the hate of peoples or aroused the rebellion of nations. But now, having brought every power to ignominious terms, and having converted the most formidable and inaccessible of his foes into a tame abettor of his plans, he yielded to the chimeras of his imagination and advanced to bestride prostrate Europe like a Colossus. No conception of the difference between underling rulers and underling nations restrained him from condemning both alike to seek dishonourable graves beneath his empire of the sword ; and little did his morality of conquest appreciate the massive resistance to be dreaded from those who a few years before had tendered homage to the empire of reason. Without any sense of anachronism he proceeded to use his victory, as if the days of the Cæsars were to be reproduced. To Prussia he vouchsafed a curtailed existence as a compliment to Alexander. " Par égard," ran the fourth article of this extraordinary treaty, " par égard pour S.M. l'empereur de toutes les Russies et voulant donner une preuve du désir sincère qu'il a d'unir les deux nations par les liens d'une confiance et d'une amitié inaltérables," \* he consented to restore

\* Martens, *Recueil des Traités*, viii., 638.

to Frederick William about half his territory. The Prussian dominions between the Elbe and the Rhine, together with those of the deposed princes of Brunswick and Hesse-Cassel, he formed into a kingdom of Westphalia for his brother Jerome. A small portion of Prussian Poland he transferred to Russia; and the rest he bestowed as the Grand-Duchy of Warsaw on the Elector of Saxony, now granted the title of king, who had become one of his vassals of the Rheinbund after the first defeats of Prussia. By the same treaty he procured the recognition of Joseph Bonaparte as King of Naples, and of Louis Bonaparte as King of Holland.\* Finally, in secret articles Napoleon pledged Alexander to support him in his quarrel with England by giving Russia permission to seize Finland and the Danubian provinces of the Porte.

It was from this secret understanding that flowed the many woes which shortly overtook Europe. Assured of his position of dictator in Germany and Italy, Napoleon hastened to array the continent against England. To this end he continued to trample upon the integrity of states: he attacked personal property and liberty; and involved count-

\* In the war of 1805 the King of the two Sicilies had broken an engagement with Napoleon to preserve his neutrality, when the appearance of an English and Russian force had invited him to join the coalition; and after the peace of Presburg the conqueror had announced, with imprecations on Ferdinand's bad faith, that his dynasty had ceased to reign. Joseph Bonaparte was then nominated to the vacant throne, and after some disturbances was firmly established in Naples, while Ferdinand retired to Sicily. Soon afterwards Louis Bonaparte was made King of Holland, a *corpus vile* in the person of Schimmelpenninck having prepared the so-called republic for the change.

less individuals in the miseries of poverty and war. In retaliation against a very extended blockade, which the British government had declared, more with a view to sanctioning the seizure of vessels sailing for any part of the coast under French rule, than with any hope that England's maritime power would be capable of enforcing it, he had issued from Berlin his famous decree, which ostracised England from the pale of European intercourse. The British Isles were henceforth to be utterly shunned by all friends of France; every person and thing connected with England, even the merchandise in the possession of continental traders, was to be confiscated; no neutral vessels which had touched at a British port were to be admitted into harbour. The paper blockade was met by a paper outlawry; and this again was encountered by orders in Council of the Grenville ministry, declaring all vessels on their way to any country in alliance with France to be lawful prize, unless they had touched at a British port and conformed to certain regulations. Thus arose the Continental System. At Tilsit, Russia and Prussia undertook to enforce it in their territories; in 1808 Austria did likewise; and the system extended with every increase of Napoleon's dominion, reaching its climax in the decree of Fontainebleau, October, 1810, which condemned all merchandise of English origin found in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Illyrian Provinces, and every place in the occupation of French troops, to be burnt. So misinformed was Napoleon concerning England's moral character and material resources, that he

regarded as a mathematical certainty the ultimate triumph of the continental blockade.\* Yet, in truth, of the many sufferers from the prohibitions England experienced least injury.† Mistress of the sea, she sought new markets in other parts of the world, or reached the old ones by a smuggler's circuit. In America the people suffered to such a degree from the policy of the English government, that war was at last declared.‡ On the continent the system carried destitution in all directions. Though Napoleon took to selling licences from his restrictions, and a vast smuggling trade sprang up in defiance of his sternest punishments, the price of many of the necessities of life became prohibitive to the greater part of the population.§ Wretched substitutes were resorted to,

\* Cf. Metternich's "Autobiography," i. 134.

† For the true causes of the distress among the English labouring classes at this time, see Chapter VIII. It is impossible to admit Mr. Leone Levi's statement ("Hist. of Brit. Commerce," p. 109), that no one suffered more than England from the system, for the trade of Great Britain made extraordinary progress during the war, and on the conclusion of peace it was found, to the surprise of most people, that the exhaustion of the continent was a worse evil to the English artisan than the system itself.

‡ The United States declared war against England in June, 1812. In 1808 they had endeavoured to obtain more considerate behaviour to neutrals from France and England, by breaking off all intercourse with the offenders, and they had succeeded in 1811 in inducing Napoleon to modify his prohibitions accordingly. The war was also partly due to England's unscrupulous practice of impressing American seamen when on board American ships, under the pretence that they were either British subjects or deserters from the British navy. Peace was restored by the Treaty of Ghent, December, 1814.

§ During the latter years of the war, for example, the price of sugar in France and other parts of the continent was as high as

and great efforts were made to produce within the empire all that was required to meet the wants of modern life; but beyond laying the basis of the manufacture of beetroot sugar,\* and giving a

5s. and 6s. a pound; coffee rose to 7s., indigo to 18s. Smuggled goods were burdened with great expenses for transport, in addition to the charge for risk. Vessels, for instance, "laden with sugar, coffee, tobacco, cotton twist, and other valuable commodities, were despatched from England, at very high rates of freight and insurance, to Salonica, where the goods were landed, and thence conveyed on horses and mules through Servia and Hungary to Vienna, for the purpose of being distributed over Germany, and, possibly, into France." Articles imported under licence, had to bear a yet more costly carriage. The cost of licence, insurance, freight, and other charges, on account of a vessel of about a hundred tons burden, making a voyage from Calais to London and back, sometimes amounted to £50,000. A ship, of which the whole cost and outfit did not amount to £4,000, earned during the latter period of the war a gross freight of £80,000, on a voyage from Bordeaux to London, and back. The freight of indigo from London to the Continent, in normal times not exceeding 1d. a pound, then amounted to about 4s. 6d.

The cost of importation into England rose in almost equal measure. The freight and premium of insurance from the Baltic was, on hemp, £30 per ton as against £2 10s. in 1837, on tallow £20 as against £1 10s., on wheat £2 10s. per quarter as against 4s. 6d., on timber £10 per load as against £1.—See Tooke's "Hist. of Prices," i., 309-311.

\* Marggraf first discovered, in 1747, that good edible sugar could be made from beetroot, but the first attempt to erect the process into a manufacture was made by Achard, who busied himself with the subject from 1786, and ultimately founded the first factory between 1796 and 1799, at Kunern in Silesia. (Cf. "*Gesch. der Technolog.*," by Karmarsch, p. 829.) Achard was helped by the King of Prussia, but probably his system would have borne little fruit, unless Napoleon had determined to make the saccharine root supply the want of foreign sugar. In 1810, the Emperor devoted a considerable sum of money to the manufacture, and the trade flourished as long as the blockade endured; but, though the most successful of the bastard industries, it would have been



dangerous stimulus to unsuitable industries, little was accomplished to compensate the people for the loss of supplies from abroad.

Napoleon himself was not ignorant of the sacrifices which the system entailed. In his message to the Senate when sending it the Berlin decree, he said, "It has cost us dear to return, after so many years of civilisation, to the principles which characterise the barbarism of the earlier ages of nations; but we have been constrained to oppose the common enemy, with the same weapons which he used against us."\* The country, however, was inclined to regard with favour his industrial policy. Though the ill effects of the blockade were keenly felt at the manufacturing centres, as the welcome to the Bourbons in the south bore evidence, the people, taught by their kings, and by the Convention itself, to wage war against the foes of France by such means, were generally more ready to appreciate Napoleon's encouragement of invention

unable to maintain its position after 1815, unless it had been favoured by the government of the Restoration. This government, to use the words of Louis Napoleon, "helped the indigenous manufacture, by exempting it from duty, and by putting a duty on colonial sugars; while it encouraged both the colonial and the home production, by putting a prohibitive duty upon foreign sugars." (See Jerrold's "Life of Napoleon III.," ii., 240, and *passim*). Thus nurtured through a sickly growth, the exotic industry has since been rendered entirely independent by improvements in the manufacturing process, and by the increased demand for sugar. It is now an important source of wealth, being extensively practised on the continent, and adopted in England and North America.

\* Blanqui, "Hist. of Political Economy in Europe" (trans.), p. 424.

and manufactures, than to understand the evils accruing from his arbitrary interference with the normal course of labour. His reign was the first considerable period of internal security to give the newly released energies of the nation an opportunity of creating wealth in modern abundance; and the blockade, the conscription, and the weight of taxation, were able neither to prevent the growth of affluence, nor to excite acute discontent in the absence of all public discussion. The comfort and content of the middle classes are significantly recorded in the inscriptions in the *Grand Livre*. While in 1798, when the annual rente was 25,111,785 francs, there were but 24,791 holders of stock; in 1810, when the rente was 56,730,583 francs, it was held by 145,663 persons; whereas in 1820, only 199,697 persons owned 172,784,838 francs of rente, and in 1830, no more than 195,370 investors were found for 204,696,459 francs of rente. The labouring classes had less cause for satisfaction, it is true, but they were not without faith in Napoleon's professions of democratic imperialism, and they at least felt assured that he would respect their prejudices against free trade in corn.

One country suffered in a peculiar manner from the heedless warfare of France and England. It was generally believed that Napoleon intended to impress Denmark into his service; and when the British government received secret intelligence that the two emperors had definitely agreed at Tilsit to summon the Danes to adopt the Continental System and to lend their fleet against England, the Port-

land ministry took the irregular step of demanding from the neutral state the custody of its fleet till the conclusion of peace. The Danes repelled with indignation the proposal with its accompanying threats, and suffered Copenhagen to be almost demolished before they capitulated, when their fleet and a great quantity of stores were carried off to England. Though there can be no doubt that if England had temporised according to the usages of polite warfare its ships would no longer have ridden the seas undisturbedly, it is at least questionable whether the danger was formidable enough to warrant such a gross outrage on the law of nations.

Nor did Sweden obtain better treatment by taking a definite part. In accordance with the treaty of Tilsit the Tsar tendered to the British government his mediation with France, and on the failure of the offer he fulfilled his engagement to declare war. The war itself was unproductive of any military operations, but Alexander was quick to appropriate a part of the booty awarded him at Tilsit to compensate him for the injuries which his empire sustained from the cessation of commercial intercourse. Without any declaration of hostilities, he sent an army into Finland on the refusal of the King of Sweden to renounce his alliance with England; and when his ambassador at Stockholm was arrested as a reprisal, he announced that the province was annexed to Russia in retaliation for Sweden's breach of international law. Unable to withstand the advance of the Russians, Gustavus IV. sought to avenge himself by invading Norway,

the property of Denmark. At this juncture he was dethroned by his officers, who had become disgusted with his petulant incapacity and chivalrous extravagances. He was forced to abdicate in favour of his uncle, the Duke Charles of Sudermania, and eventually he was permitted to go into exile. The new government made peace with Russia, by recognising the seizure of Finland, and with France by joining the league against England; and in return for the loss of the province and the privations, which the destruction of its trade was certain to inflict on such a barren country, it received back Swedish Pomerania, which had been lost in the war.

On his return to Paris Napoleon was received with servile adulation. Sagacious observers, and the successful statesmen and generals who had nothing more to win, feared that the Emperor's restless ambition would ultimately bring some great reverse upon France; but the greater number of the people were intoxicated with military glory and filled with the sense of security which uniform success induces in unreflective minds. Napoleon took the opportunity to suppress the Tribunate, whose right of free discussion, though accompanied with little or no power, gave it some consideration in the sight of the people; and he placed the Legislative Body under more effectual restraint by fixing the minimum age of its members at forty years. It was, however, in the adjoining peninsula that he sought considerable extension of his despotism. Portugal, like Denmark, had been doomed by the two emperors to sacrifice its peace and prosperity

to the crusade against England. In due time it received a command from Napoleon to declare war against Great Britain, to arrest all Englishmen, and to confiscate all English property within its territories. At the instance of the British government, the Regent of Portugal made a show of hostility towards England, but refused to make a treacherous attack on the persons and property of private individuals. This refusal Napoleon deemed a sufficient cause for war, and he made it the occasion of putting into execution a design which embraced the whole peninsula.

From 1796 Spain had served France, and since 1800 it had obeyed Napoleon. Its king was a cipher; its court was divided by the queen's hatred of her son, the Prince of Asturias; and its government was in the hands of Manuel Godoy, who was at once the paramour of the queen and the favourite of the royal pair. Godoy's policy consisted in a simple-minded purpose to seek his own aggrandisement by the help of Napoleon; and he heedlessly sacrificed the country in order to earn the French potentate's favour. On this account Spain had renounced Louisiana, paid tribute, and supplied ships and men to France. On this account it had suffered the destruction of its commerce, the discomfiture of its fleet, and the loss of colonies. Through Godoy's avarice and incapacity, the finances, army, and navy had reached the last stage of confusion and decay. The administration was inconceivably defective and corrupt. These causes, combined with recent bad harvests, had reduced the people to great

material distress and political discontent. By 1806 Godoy had come to think that he was subjecting Spain to a bootless servitude; and he made preparations for passing over to the enemies of France. He even called the nation to arms against some unspecified foe when Prussia entered into war. But on the news of Jena he repented of his treason, and deprecated Napoleon's vengeance by palpable falsehoods. Desirous of deferring a rupture with Spain, Napoleon accepted his explanations, demanding only the use of some of the troops raised to attack him. Nevertheless, at Tilsit the overthrow of the Spanish Bourbons was provided for.

The invasion of Spain was Napoleon's masterpiece of violence and fraud. Through intimidation and deceit he made the Spanish government assist in the invasion of their own country by assisting in the invasion of Portugal. Promising Godoy a share in the partition of Portugal, he obtained a thoroughfare through Spain and the help of Spanish troops; but when the House of Bragança fled to Brazil he took the whole country under his own protection. Meanwhile the family feud at the court of Madrid had caused Ferdinand, the Prince of Asturias, to petition secretly for his support. The Crown Prince was discovered to be intriguing, but, though steps were taken to disinherit him, dread of the emperor's intentions brought about a formal reconciliation between him and his parents. Now the Spaniards, by reason of their hatred against Godoy, entertained for Ferdinand an affection of which his mean and cowardly nature was quite unworthy; and they readily inferred from the contradictory conduct of

the government that he was the victim of a court plot. They believed, moreover, that Napoleon was his friend; and when a French army occupied the northern provinces, all apprehension was allayed by a declaration that it had come on behalf of the misused Ferdinand. By thus dexterously availing himself of circumstances, Napoleon got into Spain nearly a hundred thousand men with the consent of the inhabitants.

Nor was this all the advantage he derived from the discords of the Spanish court. As the perturbation of the government became evident, and the conduct of the French commanders began to excite suspicion, the long pent-up fury against Godoy gathered uncontrollable violence. A riot overthrew the favourite, and terrified the king into an abdication in favour of Ferdinand. But the new king was as much under the influence of Napoleon as his father's government had been. Savary was sent to entice him to Bayonne; and he was decoyed by this agent of ill-fame to Burgos, then to Vittoria, and finally across the Pyrenees. At Bayonne he found himself a prisoner, and was shortly informed that his title to the crown of Spain was worthless. Charles IV. and his queen had soon repented of their hasty abdication, and it was in response to their appeal that Napoleon had contrived to get Ferdinand into his power in order to play off the two parties against one another. Confronting parents and son, Napoleon presided over scenes of strife and bitterness which shook Ferdinand's stubborn temper so greatly that a violent threat at length made him resign his claims to the throne.

Charles, too, not daring to resume his crown under such circumstances, confirmed his former abdication in consideration of a château and a pension. Thus Napoleon acquired, as he thought, the disposal of another European crown. . He gave it to Joseph Bonaparte, whose kingdom of Naples was transferred to his brother-in-law, Joachim Murat. Only by degrees did he discover that the Treaty of Bayonne was but the beginning of the contest for its possession.\*

Yet Napoleon was not without warning that the people, with whom he was now about to deal, were animated by a different spirit from that which he had hitherto met with among continental nations. The incidents, which had given weight to his menaces against Ferdinand, might have shown him that his legions would encounter a new and deadlier kind of warfare in striving to assert the concessions which he had wrung from a vicious family. It was the intelligence, that the populace of Madrid had massacred hundreds of Murat's soldiers, which had given him a pretext to fasten upon his prisoner the blame of a murderer. Necessarily the outbreak was speedily crushed by the disciplined troops

\* The first object of Napoleon in subduing Portugal and Spain was to injure more effectually British commerce. In this he showed great want of foresight. As soon as the Portuguese government was driven to the Brazils, it necessarily opened them to English trade; and when the Spanish monarchy was overthrown, its colonies revolted from the control of the mother country, and admitted English goods. Hence a new South American trade was created for England by Napoleon himself, just in time to countervail the great falling off of exports to the United States in consequence of their strained relations with Great Britain.—Cf. Tooke, i., 276.



when they had recovered from their surprise, but the cruellest vengeance was able neither to efface the furious nature of the people's onslaught, nor to eradicate the fanatical motives which had produced it. And this revelation was verified throughout the country as soon as Napoleon's usurpation became known. The Spaniards instantly rose in rebellion. But they did not rebel against the French rule, because it seemed to them the last consequence of Bourbon misgovernment. Much as they had suffered from the sins and incapacity of their own dynasty, they bore no resentment against the House itself. They hated Godoy and his system, but the majority of the nation remained steadfastly loyal to the throne, and was ready to transfer its allegiance to the miserable Ferdinand, because he was the rightful heir and was the enemy of Godoy, while his father was hopelessly in the power of the odious favourite. The real motives of the insurrection were hatred of the stranger, religious fury against the despoiler of altars, and a ferocious patriotism. Spain was no divided Germany, it was no inchoate Italy. Notwithstanding its strong provincial feelings it was an united nation, with great common national memories; and for its liberty and national integrity it rose to fight to the death. The ignorance, barbarism, and bigotry of the people only contributed to their fierce self-devotion and determination. The very faults of the nation co-operated with its virtues to expose the monstrous nature of the Napoleonic despotism.

Of this Napoleon anticipated nothing. To his

cold, calculating understanding all that is generously impulsive in human nature was strange. He sent his generals to quiet the country with as much assurance as if the task before them were a mere police measure. He as little apprehended that his efforts to subdue the Spanish people would be endless, as he had expected that the whole country not in the occupation of his troops would be in insurrection within a week. Yet Moncey was repulsed from Valencia, Dupont was compelled to relinquish his attack on Seville, and beleaguered Saragossa repelled all the efforts of its besiegers; and although Bessières beat the northern army of the Spaniards and laid Madrid open to the French, the effects of this success were insignificant compared with that of the capture of Dupont and his army of 23,000 men by the Spaniards of Andalusia at Baylen, which forced King Joseph to fly from the capital and all the French troops to retire to the Ebro. In Portugal the people eagerly revolted, and the Spanish soldiers, who had assisted the French to occupy the country, gave them their help. Stranger still was the instantaneous accord which united against their common foe the newly-risen Spanish people and the long-resistant English nation. In a moment the ancient hatred between the two races was cast into abeyance by a consciousness that they were both fighting for the rights of peoples against the caprices of unscrupulous autocracy.\* The people of England rushed to the aid

\* "From the moment of the rising of the people of the Pyrenean peninsula," said Wordsworth in the most eloquent of his prose works, "there was a mighty change; we were instant-

of the Spanish patriots with stores, munitions, money, and troops ; and soon Napoleon had reason to know that nations in alliance were not, like their rulers, to be easily divided by jealousy and misfortune.

Before starting to quell in person the insurrection, and drive the English out of Portugal, Napoleon confirmed with Alexander at Erfurt the principles laid down at Tilsit, and consigned to him the supervision of central Europe. He took the command of nearly two hundred thousand men in Spain as early as November 1808. The Spaniards had endeavoured to invest their efforts with some coherence by forming a central Junta out of representatives from the provincial Juntas which had spontaneously arisen. But the central Junta displayed singular military and political incapacity, which was aggravated by the insubordination of the provincials. Miserably inefficient precautions were taken to provide the troops with necessaries ; and the supplies from England were regularly lost to theft and the enemy. A plan for the total overthrow of the French armies brought upon the military forces five severe defeats, which left the enemy undisputed masters of the field. By the end of the year Napoleon had brought his troops

neously animated ; and, from that moment, the contest assumed the dignity, which it is not in the power of anything but hope to bestow. . . . It was imagined that this new-born spirit of resistance, rising from the most sacred feelings of the human heart, would diffuse itself through many countries ; and not merely for the distant future, but for the present, hopes were entertained as bold as they were disinterested and generous."—*Concerning the Convention of Cintra* ; "Prose Works," i., 41.

from their defensive position on the Ebro into Madrid itself. Thence he sallied forth to meet with overwhelming numbers a British army under Sir John Moore; but before the famous pursuit to Corunna had ended, a new war of rebellion necessitated his return to Paris.

The Franco-Austrian war of 1809 was the first symptom that Napoleon was by repulsion educating Europe up to those virtues of self-respect which were England's and Spain's by instinct. Though a contest avowedly undertaken to retrieve Austria's losses by the Peace of Presburg, it was the outcome of entirely different motives from those which had so long gambled away the lives and resources of the monarchy's subjects. Thugut and his system had been brought into disrepute by the criticism of facts; and in their stead ruled Count von Stadion, who cared as little for the indiscriminate territorial aggrandisement of the Hapsburgs as he cared much for the independence of Germany. But since the Peace of Tilsit it had become evident that Napoleon's schemes endangered the very existence of Austria and Prussia; and Stadion, in common with all who regarded the situation from a patriotic point of view, desired to attack and thwart them on the first favourable occasion. The Spanish insurrection offered an opportunity and an inspiring example. It suggested to Germany after the late years of distress the worth of national exertions and the community of national interests. Ancient animosities were sunk in a common feeling of woe. The miserable Prussia was no longer the

object of jealous dislike. The populations of the Rheinbund, smarting under the conscription and the Continental System, aghast at tyranny which could murder a guiltless bookseller to stem the torrent of indignant literature, were looked upon as brethren in misfortune. The prestige of the dynasties had received a grievous shock from the parvenu who claimed to be the sole fountain of princely power. Hopes of a national liberation through national action began to animate the bolder spirits; and Stadion's war was as much a response to these feelings as it was a last venture to repair the fortunes of the Austrian empire.

Nevertheless the time was not yet come for a national insurrection. The Tyrolese, brave with "a few strong instincts and a few plain rules," flew to arms at the first signal; the Black Brunswickers showed how private enterprise might fight for public freedom; the desperate attempts of Schill and Dörnberg proved the hardihood of the prevailing disaffection; but these were isolated efforts which brought no other result than death or exile to those engaged in them. The real conflict was, as heretofore, between the regular armies of the two belligerent powers. In this sphere, however, the new spirit was not without influence. The Austrian army was reorganised and a Landwehr instituted with more than customary regard for individual worth and rational method, while the notorious dilatoriness of Vienna officialism gave way to an energy which succeeded in outstripping the vigilance of the French emperor. For once the army of the Hapsburgs

was in the field before the foe ; for once it seized a considerable advantage by the celerity and sagacity of its movements. But then the old habits of hesitation and sluggishness returned. Within a few days the Austrian troops forfeited their position of vantage to the vigour of Napoleon's operations, and in spite of their conspicuous valour and determination. were driven back from Bavaria, through Vienna, across the Danube. Here for many weeks they held the French army at bay, and more than once brought the invader to the verge of total defeat. Yet their leader, the Archduke Charles, general of repute though he was, lacked the activity and confidence which were necessary to snatch the reward of hard fighting from the artifices and strategy of his opponent. The battle of Wagram closed a desperately contested campaign with an equally well-contested action ; but such were the resources of the victor that it left Austria as powerless as Prussia after Jena to escape the worst penalties of defeat. The Hapsburgs were compelled to furnish the materials for another Napoleonic state in the Illyrian provinces ; and they had to make cessions to Bavaria, Saxony, Warsaw, and the Tsar, incurring altogether the loss of nearly four millions of subjects, and all access to the Mediterranean.

Finally this family of long imperial descent was constrained to pay to the adventurer, who had humbled it, the last tribute which birth can yield to talent. The widow of General Beauharnais, the beautiful Creole who had shared with Napoleon all his successes and had added to his life of political

and military activity the charm of an attachment maintained with some degree of constancy, had failed to provide an heir for the empire of her lord. She was divorced; and immediate steps were taken by the emperor to obtain a consort who might present to the world his dynasty invested with the grandeur of ancient royalty in addition to the splendour of modern achievement. After some delay, occasioned by the refusal of the Tsar to accede to Napoleon's request for a Russian grand duchess, application was made to the Emperor of Austria. On the defeat of his efforts Stadion had given place to a minister of few scruples, to whom the unhappy position of the Austrian House readily commended a resort to its old expedient of marriage. Napoleon received the Archduchess Marie Louise; and Metternich obtained, as he thought, an interval of quiet for the recruiting of the empire's resources. In a manifesto of 1813 Francis protested that he "gave away what was most dear to his heart in order to avert incurable evils and to secure some pledge of a better future."\* "The Austrian people," says Metternich, "took the event with that feeling which, after long wars and boundless sacrifices, greets every prospect of peace as a blessing; they looked upon it as a pledge of peace."† Europe generally was thunderstruck. "The Austrian marriage," wrote Wellington, "is a terrible event, and must prevent any great movement on the Continent for the present."‡ But, though too

\* Lanfrey, iii., 548.

† "Autobiography," i., 126.

‡ To Crawford, April 4th, 1810.

much importance was attributed to the transaction, Napoleon got all that he wanted from it. In due time the King of Rome was born, and the Bonapartist dynasty seemed firmly established.

The extent of the French Empire had then reached its limits. La Valais, Oldenburg, and some districts on the North German coast had been annexed, and both the Roman States and Holland had been incorporated into it. The last two additions, however, were based rather on the inherent weakness of its system than on its genuine capacity for expansion. The Eternal City was occupied because Pius VII. found that nothing but humiliation was to be gained for the Church by serving the new Roman Emperor; and Holland was overrun because Napoleon's own brother felt compelled to withstand the tyranny of the Continental System. The Pope was taken captive to Savona in defiance of a Bull of Excommunication; King Louis was thrust from his throne as soon as he strove to do his duty towards his subjects by openly contesting the Emperor's commands; but the remonstrance which the Pontiff offered in the name of the Catholic world against Imperial Secularism, and the chivalry of Louis Bonaparte in behalf of an oppressed nation, were not so much futile acts of rebellion as protests which gave token that Napoleon's ruthless despotism was defeating itself. Although the French occupation of the Papal States summarily destroyed the abuses of ecclesiastical feudalism, and for the first time since the days of the ancient Romans justice and public order were efficiently enforced from the Alps to the Straits of Messina; though the full



possession of Holland appeared to strengthen the strategic position of France against its one relentless foe,—the fact, that a time-serving Pope and an unambitious individual like Louis Bonaparte led the way to these changes by resisting to the utmost the policy of the Emperor, was clear evidence that already his vast empire was becoming, as Wellington rightly saw, all hollow within and at variance with the wishes, the interests, and even the existence of civilised society. It was but a coincidence that when Napoleon's hand reached from far into the Iberian Peninsula to the plains of the Tsar, from the North Sea, the Danish frontier, and the Baltic to the Mediterranean and the domains of the Ottoman Porte, the time of his fall was near. Here was no question of the limits to the life and growth of empires. Certainly the same temper which piled conquest upon conquest was answerable for the misuse of the conquered peoples; but there was no real connection between the extent of the Napoleonic realm and its speedy dissolution. Whatever may have been the potential vitality of the structure, it was its creator's brutal disregard of the sufferings of the people, and his blind determination to be the dictator of Europe, which brought it to sudden destruction.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE CONSOLIDATION OF EUROPE.

“Ce qui avilit et dégrade trente millions d’hommes ne saurait être durable.”—*Napoléon Bonaparte.*

“Unser ist durch tausendjährigen Besitz  
Der Boden—und der fremde Herrenknecht  
Soll kommen dürfen und uns Ketten schmieden  
Und Schmach anthun auf unserer eigenen Erde?  
Ist keine Hilfe gegen solchen Drang?  
Nein, eine Grenze hat Tyrannenmacht.  
Wenn der Gedrückte nirgends Recht kann finden,  
Wenn unerträglich wird die Last—greift er  
Hinauf getrosten Muthes in den Himmel  
Und holt herunter seine ew’gen Rechte,  
Die droben hangen unveräusserlich  
Und unzerbrechlich wie die Sterne selbst.  
Der alte Urstand der Natur kehrt wieder,  
Wo Mensch dem Menschen gegenübersteht,—  
Zum letzten Mittel, wenn kein anderes mehr  
Verfangen will, ist ihm das Schwert gegeben.”

*Schiller.*

HOWEVER men regarded the strength and weakness of the French empire, an early liberation of Europe was generally despaired of. Even in England, when the return of the wreck of Moore’s army was followed by the news that the Spaniards had been chased off the field; when it was known that a second expedition under Sir Arthur Wellesley had won at great cost the battle of Talavera, only to be compelled to retire again into Portugal; when it was confessed that mismanagement had sacrificed

to fever and an ignominious retreat a fine armament which had been sent to create in Holland a diversion in favour of Austria; when it was perceived that the Peace of Vienna would enable the French Emperor to operate with his most seasoned legions in the Peninsula; when it was realised that the flame of rebellion survived only in a remote corner of the Continent where it could hardly become dangerous to the commander of more than half the levies of Europe;—then, in the irreconcilable island itself, the enthusiasm, which the Spanish insurrection had aroused, was followed by a fit of the deepest dejection. Wellington alone retained confidence in the cause of freedom. He had only too good reason to think little of the Spanish armies, and he underrated, with all the professional prejudice of the British regular soldier, the effectiveness of the guerilla warfare which the Spanish peasantry waged with furious zeal and sanguinary effect. Yet when the Emperor sent such vast reinforcements into the Peninsula, that Andalusia, the soul of the insurrection, was reduced early in 1810, and Cadiz alone resisted with success, he refused to participate in the sullen mood of his countrymen; and dared to relieve the Perceval Cabinet from acquiescing in the faint-hearted demands of the commercial public by taking upon himself the responsibility of contesting to the last the English foothold in Portugal. His conviction was that, if Great Britain persistently disputed the French occupation of Spain, some great misadventure to the empire would eventually afford an opportunity of assuming the offensive against France itself.

Supported by this prescient hope, he was content to renounce the glory of attack whenever the enemy's strength made action hazardous. Rather than risk a disabling defeat he surrendered the ground won in the hardships of the field, and, combating the foe with the manœuvres of retreat, repulsed him with starvation before the impregnable lines of Torres Vedras.

Meanwhile the infatuation of Napoleon rapidly induced the crisis for which Wellington waited. Intent on new gratifications to his ambition, the Emperor left the conduct of the war to his generals, and issued from Paris instructions for their guidance. But want of information, distance, and obstacles to communication, thwarted his efforts to control his armies from across the Pyrenees; jealousy, indolence, and lust of plunder among the generals, conspired to defeat his plans for a connected scheme of operations; while the troops died off from privation, or fell away before the untiring attacks of the guerilla. Yet, as levy after levy of the Empire's forces was being drafted into the Peninsula only to render desolation still more ghastly, and it became more and more evident that Spain would not be subdued till the Emperor condescended to prosecute the war in person, preparations were being made to engage in the most stupendous and dangerous military enterprise of modern times. The only alliance, which Napoleon ever formed with any pretence to reciprocity, had resolved itself into its true elements of antagonism. His agreement with Alexander had never rested on any grounds more substantial

than the ambition of the moment, and from the instant of its conclusion mutual distrust and the conqueror's savage intolerance of a compeer assured its early disruption. After the final defeat of Austria the support of the Tsar ceased to be essential to the consummation of the French empire, and the fiction of his friendship was no longer invoked as an object of terror. At the same time both autocrats cherished grievances against one another which could not fail ultimately to destroy all semblance of amity. Napoleon was piqued by his failure to obtain a Russian wife, and Alexander's sensitive feelings were hurt by the precipitate manner in which he sought satisfaction elsewhere. Alexander, again, resented as a menace against Russia the enlargement of the Duchy of Warsaw, and he was greatly offended by Napoleon's spoliation of his relative, the Duke of Oldenburg. On the other hand he was charged by the French Emperor with remissness in fulfilling the obligations of an ally in the war with Austria; and his consequent slight remuneration was another source of offence to him.

But these vexations were symptoms rather than causes of the approaching rupture. They did but illustrate the anomalous nature of the association, while it was the great contradiction itself which brought Russia into direct conflict with Napoleon. Alexander had allied his country with France in the hope that thereby profit would be gained at the expense of the Swedes and Turks, yet his acceptance of the Continental System entailed far heavier losses than the most successful campaigns

in Finland and on the Danube could repair. Russia was of all European countries the most interested in obtaining a free market for raw produce, and nowhere else did the blockade so paralyse industry and defeat the ordinary requirements of civilisation. Hence the bargain proved to be from the first an unequal one; and as Napoleon grew more impracticable, all hopes of obtaining compensation for the country's sacrifices disappeared. It was, therefore, only appropriate that Alexander should protest against the bootless character of his alliance, and defy Napoleon's further encroachments, by repudiating the System. Still more in accordance with the realities of the situation was his counter policy of levying almost prohibitive duties on French goods, and assembling a large army on the western frontiers under the pretence of enforcing the ukaz. This step was taken on the last day of 1810; and from that time the two emperors continued to make strenuous efforts for a supreme struggle.

The European war, which commenced with the invasion of Russia, summed up and balanced the strength and weakness of the Napoleonic empire. When the campaign opened Napoleon commanded more than half a million men of different nations and languages. His numerous vassals had obediently sent large contingents; Austria had acquiesced in the logical consequences of the matrimonial alliance; Prussia had been compelled to furnish its quota of troops together with an enormous quantity of supplies; and the whole host had been provided with all manner of necessaries for a

lengthy march into the barren north. Alexander, on the other hand, though he had bought peace from the Porte by renouncing part of the booty assigned to him at Tilsit, and had purchased the alliance of Sweden by the promise of Norway, was able to muster against him less than half this number of men, very insufficiently equipped. But the inexplicable delays of his enemy, the climate and roads of his inhospitable land, the Fabian tactics of Barclay de Tolly, and the resolute temper of the fanatical Muscovite, reduced the two armies to a like level of misery; and, when the fragments of the Grand Army recrossed the Niemen, Napoleon's immediately available forces were but little superior to the jaded remnants of the pursuing Russians. Nevertheless, though the empire's best defenders and most vigorous resources had been sacrificed to the perilous temper of its creator, it was far from being defenceless. Napoleon had paid the extreme penalty for his headstrong persistence against physical obstacles, as had Charles XII. a century before him, but his return to Paris was no repetition of the Swedish king's flight into Turkey. Heavy as was the blow which the march on Moscow dealt at his fortunes, his strategic genius and reserve forces left him still the most formidable power in Europe; and he prepared to take the field again in defence of an intact, though weakened, empire.

This aspect of the situation was fully understood by continental statesmen. Alexander himself hesitated to carry the war into the enemy's country, and many of his advisers counselled an

unheroic policy of petty aggrandisement. Nor in all probability would he have assumed the part of a general liberator, unless he had been urged by German patriots to initiate a rebellion against the French yoke. For the disappointments of 1809 had not arrested the growth of indignant discontent among the more virile portions of the German people; and at this crisis Napoleon found himself threatened in the rear by an insurrection which had never entered into his calculations when he disposed his garrisons among the subject people. Yet the rebellion, which was to turn a military disaster into a decisive catastrophe, and was to convert threats of English invasion and menaces of Russian Cossacks into fatal attacks on the French empire, differed greatly from the common type of popular risings. Napoleon's contempt for the German people as a national body was no failure of his usual sagacity. The Germans were hardly less capable of spontaneous and united action than when they were fettered by the authority of some three hundred potentates; and they lacked the passionate instincts of national life as completely as they had lost the forms of an independent national existence. But among those who had been trained to follow spirited and able leaders, the ennobling influence of the nation's natural chiefs had induced a resolute spirit of self-assertion, which common suffering directed towards a common object.

Long before this time the desolation of the Thirty Years' War had begun to pass away; and returning prosperity had enabled the more prosperous members of the German people to move beyond the



sordid cares of daily life. More than half a century had elapsed since Lessing had laid the foundation on which was reared the splendid fabric of modern German thought and poetry. Since then, works of thought and imagination had supplied a centre round which the middle classes rallied in brotherly communion. Without calling up any vivid sense of unity, they gradually diffused a vague feeling of civic toleration which was the first step towards national concord. But, what was of more immediate benefit, they braced the German mind by repudiating that habitual deference to foreign dogmatism which had oppressed native talent, and thwarted indigenous energy. Though escape from the pseudo-classicism of the stranger was achieved only by passing under the spell of another nation's genius, the close kinship between the English and German mind caused the change of school to be equivalent to an act of self-assertion; and the citizens, who had been taught by tradition that French taste and authority were the supreme arbiters of intellectual and artistic excellence, were conveyed directly to the tremendous conclusion that notwithstanding their divisions, notwithstanding the unsuitableness of their language for diplomacy and *menus*, Germans might yet possess of their very own the substance and form of a literature worthy of a great nation. An eager discontent, a nobly misdirected striving, seized the more impulsive youth. The *Sturm und Drang* episode spent its undisciplined forces. And men arose who were fit to be masters at such a time. Kant engaged the intellects of the thinkers and

teachers by his critical philosophy, and thence led them to an ethical creed as exalted and severe as that of the Roman Stoics.\* In imaginative literature the themes of freedom and independence received fervid celebration;† and the way was prepared for those warlike lyrics of Arndt, Rückert, and Körner, which, as even Goethe admitted, had some effect in uniting together Germans at the moment of battle. Fichte, Kant's successor in philosophy, and Schleiermacher, the theologian, proclaimed the worth of patriotic enthusiasm, and national integrity; while gymnastics, lately conspicuous among the novelties of pedagogic reformers, were fanatically commended by old Jahn as a strengthener alike of the muscles and character.

The relation of this yearning for spiritual regeneration to an actual struggle for freedom was well illustrated by the famous Tugendbund. The original Königsberg society of this name was instituted by some earnest and cultivated men for the purposes of moral improvement, but under the pressure of national adversity it quickly became a strenuous inculcator of those virtues which bind citizens together for the common defence of their weal and honour. Though never numbering more than three or four hundred members, the Tugendbund furnished the type for many secret associations, which have frequently been confounded with it. Many of those who were engaged in the risings of 1809 were connected with it, and the patriots of 1813 were conscious followers of its principles. Hence, while it was never the extensive organisa-

\* See Chapter XII.

† See Chapter XIII.

tion which the French supposed, the league for individual improvement came to play an important part among the influences which prepared the Germans for a war of liberation.

A long distance, however, separates nascent aspiration from mature effort; and Germany's deliverance would have come but tardily if action had waited on the fruition of an intellectual revival. Literary culture is not only slow to diffuse itself through the masses of a nation, but in itself it possesses no political content. It can make possible political life by providing a bond of union among men of the same race and language; it can induce disinterested and lofty habits of mind; yet without some elements or institutions of an existent State it will lack material in which to take practical shape. Tradition hands down from the rough shifts of expediency the different political types which modern societies develop according to their necessities and measures of culture; and in Germany at this time there existed only the monarchical form of government from which renewed mental activity could draw political initiative and guidance. And it was here that Napoleon had most deeply injured the German nation, for with one exception he had denationalised every monarchy. The exception, too, he had degraded as low as conquest could reduce, without annihilating, a state. Not content with driving Prussia into a corner of north-eastern Europe, he had kept it fast in the bonds of affliction by exacting an indemnity too heavy for the impoverished country to bear; he had plundered its daily sustenance to feed the Grand Army; he

had forbidden it to raise a military force of any strength; he had forced it to take arms against its intimate, Russia; he had obliged Frederick William to submit ignominiously to his dictation in matters of domestic government. Nevertheless, stricken as it was from without and degenerate as it was within, the Prussian monarchy had not fallen so low as to be incapable of vindicating on a favourable opportunity its right to be the champion of independence in Germany.

This prerogative was Prussia's by virtue of its achievement of forming from among Germans one independent European power. Its capacity for a heroic effort of recovery was assured by the history of its development. Raised to a commanding position by the severe discipline of able rulers, it was prepared to make great sacrifices at the instance of trusted leaders; and its service had attracted from all parts of Germany talent which could not find worthier employment than under the Hohenzollerns. It is true that the monarchy had suffered much from the blunders of incapacity, but this was due partly to adventitious causes and partly to the confusion which Frederick the Great's method of personal government had necessarily produced when weaker men tried to conduct by it the affairs of an enlarged state. Hence when dire calamity exposed the futility of delegating to irresponsible ministers the work which by theory belonged to an ubiquitous autocrat, and it became evident that trenchant reforms were imperative if the monarchy were to live into another age, Prussia possessed both the men to administer and the

resignation to suffer drastic, though well-considered remedies. The civil reforms now undertaken were chiefly concerned with the introduction of a more firmly connected system of administration and a more civilised agrarian organisation.\* Such changes had recommended themselves to many of the well-instructed Prussian statesmen, but their immediate execution was due to Von Stein, a knight of the old Empire, who had come to see that the hope of Germany as a nation lay with the standard of the House of Brandenburg. To his resolute and clear-sighted determination was due the imposition of an organic reform when the people hardly felt its painfulness in the anguish inflicted by defeat, and when some bracing influence was most urgently needed. Stein's own force and earnestness of character were in a manner diffused by these measures among the Prussian people; and his example of patriotic constancy readily found reception when self-help and self-respect were given new social significance. But, justly as he is remembered as the first of Prussia's regenerators, he was not permitted to complete the work he had so well inaugurated. His immediate object of preparing the people to throw off the French yoke was disclosed by an intercepted letter; and he provoked the hostility of the Emperor too unseasonably for Frederick William to retain his services without running grievous risk. A little later, he experienced what it was to be under the ban of the new empire; and he fled from place to place as a foe to France and the

\* See *infra*, pp. 247-53.

Rheinbund till he resumed in the service of the Tsar his war against the Napoleonic despotism. Yet his reforms were not suffered to fail for want of support. The difficulties of the time dismissed from office the ministry appointed in his stead; and Hardenberg, though countenanced by Napoleon as Prussia's agent in bankruptcy, proceeded with all zeal to consummate what to many seemed little better than a Jacobin revolution under a monarchy.

But Prussia was nothing if not military; and Napoleon appeared to have effectually consigned it to insignificance when he insisted that its army should be limited to 42,000 men. More fatal, however, were the shortcomings of the service itself. Before Jena the army had been composed of slaves drilled into machines, of patrician dunces martialised by arrogance and vice, and of commanders stricken with years and decrepit in understanding. By legal and social distinctions it was severed from the mass of the nation; and so offensive was the demeanour of its members, so alien to civic life were its tone and constitution, that the Prussian burghers contemplated with positive satisfaction the overthrow of the soldiery kept for their defence and control.\* And, indeed, the

\* How well founded was this dislike may be learnt from a cabinet order of Frederick William III. in 1798, in which the young officers and soldiers of every rank are warned that they must not treat the least of the burghers with roughness (*brüskiren*) on penalty of arrest, cassation, or death, for it is these civilians and not the king who keep the army, and on their bread live the soldiers committed to the royal command (Scherr, *Deutsche Kultur-und Sittengeschichte*, 6th ed., p. 506). In the *publicandum*, too, which the king issued after the shameful campaign, the

destruction of the old army, and the decrease of Prussia's population, made necessary a less exclusive military system which replaced for good the work of Frederick William I. and the old Dessauer.

The truth that societies follow laws is often expressed by the rude and inaccurate generalisation that history repeats itself. But, though an event can never be exactly reproduced, and the past can never be recalled without the incidents which make it past, a society or state will act on similar occasions in the same way that its traditions and organic constitution prescribe. So Prussia, continuing to follow in its fallen condition the main law of its existence, accomplished the work of military reform with a thoroughness and severity which gave it again the foremost place among the monarchies of the sword. Nay, the repetition extended yet further; for as its old professional army had been the highest development of what had originally been invented by France, so now its new military system was but the full application of the principle of citizen armies, first realised by the Republic. An important difference, however, distinguished Prussia's share in this second transaction. Whereas its earlier contributions to military science merely carried to an extreme result a system which had already wrought great political changes, this later step in army organisation

punishment of death was threatened not only to those convicted of cowardice and insubordination, but to those found guilty of plundering and illtreating the burghers and country people (Häusser, *Deutsche Geschichte*, iii., 147, 2nd ed.). It is notorious that many of the Prussian citizens extended to their conqueror cordial recognition of their pleasanter manners.

converted the desperate expedient of a troubled period into a regular institution of the State, and thus directly and definitively incorporated into the life of Europe one of the most deep-reaching innovations of the Revolution.

The necessity of placing the Prussian army on a broader basis gave authority to a few distinguished officers who were anxious to entrust the defence of the country to the people as Stein had the economy of production and exchange. One of these, Von Gneisenau, had made memorable one of the few heroic episodes in the late war by leading the citizens with his soldiers to the defence of Kolberg. Together with Von Clausewitz, the well-known writer on strategy, he assisted Scharnhorst to bring about the greatest military reform of modern times. Scharnhorst was the son of a Hanoverian peasant, and his fame has been bruited abroad by no loud feats of arms. Mortally wounded at Gross Görschen, he lived to witness only the uncertain commencement of the war for which he had devotedly prepared; and the laurels of the campaign fell to fiery old Blücher and his mentor Gneisenau. Yet he was the presiding hero of the war of liberation. He it was who reiterated the principle that every native of a state is its born defender, though not, as he said, in imitation of the conscription in France, but in appeal to an ordinance of Frederick William I., which extravagant exemption had rendered almost nugatory. From him came the device of keeping the whole manhood trained to arms, without infringing the letter of Napoleon's injunctions or exceeding the



resources of the State, by drafting the recruits into the reserve after a short period of service with the colours. He thus gave a new meaning to the principle of citizen armies. Heretofore conscription had simply meant a compulsory levy from among the citizens, such as the French Republic had first enforced in 1798 at the motion of Jourdan when the danger of the country ceased to induce a sufficient influx of volunteers. Henceforth citizen armies were to be armed nations; and the industrial type of nineteenth century civilisation was to assume a militant aspect hardly less characteristic than that of the age when man's status was determined by military service instead of by contract.

The technical advances in the art of war during this turbulent period were, of course, very considerable. Military science could not fail to progress when a practical strategist like Napoleon, a theoretical tactician like the Archduke Charles, and an organiser like Carnot, presided over European campaigns; and the application of scientific improvements was hardly to be missed after the intense and repeated illustration they received. From the equipment of the rank and file to the formation of the highest tactical unit, from scout and out-post service to the great crucial manœuvres in the field, the method of conducting military operations advanced almost to that point where the introduction of arms of greater precision and longer range was to necessitate a new departure. The use of large citizen armies, with their defective mechanical training and high individual intelligence, had early

in the wars suggested attacking in loose formations; and so far it made a memorable contribution to the art of war. But neither this change, nor the general effects involved in the employment of greater masses of troops, were consequences of the high order which the Prussian form of conscription rapidly produced. From a military point of view, Scharnhorst's scheme perpetuated and intensified all the technical changes which citizen armies had brought about; from a political and social point of view, it had all the significance which belonged to the difference between making armies out of societies and turning societies into armies.\* Its ready adoption was secured as much by the monarchical traditions of Europe as by the stress of the revolutionary wars. Piedmont's stern *régime* had long included a system of compulsory recruiting; Russia's modern autocracy was founded on military obligations; and nearly all states possessed, in theory at least, some legal provision for raising forced levies, when French aggression either imposed or incited a general recourse to conscription.

\* Before the outbreak of the Revolution, Rumford, who had gone into the Bavarian service, and undertaken to reform the Bavarian army, saw that the old military system should give way to citizen armies, though his experiment had little in common with Prussian conscription. "To establish," he says, "a respectable standing military force, which should do the least possible harm to the population, morals, manufactures, and agriculture of the country, it was necessary to make soldiers citizens, and citizens soldiers" (*Essays*, i. 5). His own scheme consisted mainly in civilising the rank and file; secondarily, in sending them to their homes on long furloughs, and giving the regiments fixed territorial positions. These latter points approached very near to a form of short service.

In Austria and Prussia, for example, conscription was prompted by the sense of self-preservation; and wherever the power of Napoleon reached, there the blessings of the equitable code were balanced by the hardships of compulsory military service. Hence it was when the Empire's youth had grown accustomed to the visit of a ruthless blood-tax, that the method of keeping the whole capable male population prepared to muster at sound of drum, was exhibited with such cogency that rulers had no alternative but to apply the system, as far as the docility and resources of their subjects would permit.

In France, however, the first and cheapest amelioration by which the Bourbons could bid for the favour of the people was the abolition of the conscription. But it was soon found that voluntary enlistment did not bring a sufficient number of recruits; and a moderate measure of compulsion was introduced only to be made more stringent as years went on, though no more conscripts were enrolled at a time than the service required. In Prussia, on the other hand, the resource of despair was retained with a full knowledge of its value. After the War of Liberation, the people, who had hardly lost their dislike of the regular army, willingly magnified the deeds of the half-trained Landwehr till the opinion became prevalent that a thorough technical training was empty play, and that a very short spell of service with the colours was sufficient to fit men for the day of battle. But the authorities speedily dissipated the dream of an all-powerful militia. They knew too

well the heavy price at which the Landwehr had gained its reputation to entrust the existence of the State to patriotism and courage alone. In June, 1814, Von Boyen entered the ministry of war with the purpose of reconciling the people to serious military service before the enthusiasm of the war had died away; and in September he published a law which taught them that they had only begun to taste the privileges of being their own soldiers. All Prussian citizens were declared liable to serve five years in the standing army, three being with the colours and two in the reserve; they were then to be drafted into the Landwehr for fourteen years; while the Landsturm, a force designed for defence against actual invasion, was to be composed of all males between the ages of seventeen and fifty who were not in the standing army or reserve. The rigour of this measure was somewhat mitigated by commuting the service of those of the educated classes, who could equip themselves, to one year with the colours and three in the Landwehr; and the separate Jäger detachments were also permitted to remain as select companies for them to congregate in; but even the partisans of universal military service were amazed at the uncompromising character of the edict. Austria likewise retained the conscription, but it adopted an inferior form of short service which considerably impaired the results of the system.

England alone of the Great Powers remained content with the army of a bygone time. Voluntary enlistment continued to be relied on to provide a sufficient number of the more worthless members

of the community to fight for the defence of the kingdom and colonies, though happily, in 1806, a dearth of recruits induced the government to attract a better class of men than formerly by passing Windham's Bill for reducing the lifelong term of service to one of seven years in time of peace and ten in time of war. Nevertheless, wars and rumours of wars compelled the English people to take, in their fashion, a step in military progress, parallel with that of the continental nations. The volunteers were now for the first time organised; and ultimately they formed an army of four hundred thousand free citizens. Hitherto the Honourable Artillery Company had been a solitary instance of the latent spirit; and with the departure of peril it became so again. But enough had been done to evince how the British system of voluntary co-operation, aided by an insular position, might keep pace with continental compulsion. In 1858 the force was revived to serve in the place of a citizen army; and at this day it still promises to supply in case of necessity a counterpart to the forced levies of the continent.

These facts show how remotely related to the truth is the current explanation that the vast size of our modern armies is due to the ambition and jealousies of modern states. Armies are now kept for reasons very similar to those which have always obtained, but their size is solely due to the conflicts of the Revolution and the principle of civic equality. It is among the strangest of historical inversions that there issued directly from a great upheaval of popular force the military system which, as Sir

Erschine May says,\* has undoubtedly arrested the development of democracy by encouraging the military spirit, and by creating armies, which, originally destined for foreign wars, have become bulwarks against internal disaffection. Possibly the great burdens involved by these armies may produce a reaction which will precipitate revolution and democracy ; but this will not be because the great military monarchies have in this matter opposed themselves to the progressive spirit of the age, as the same historian goes on to suggest ; for, in point of fact, the system was born with the age itself, and if it lead to any grave social crisis it will do so in direct historical sequence from the great revolution which gave democracy a firm foothold in Europe.†

Chief of the many difficulties, which hindered Prussia from welcoming the arrival of the victorious Russians by an insurrection against the French, was the anomaly that the monarchy was technically at war with Alexander. More than one French garrison was overpowered by the people, but in this country of impassive discipline no general movement was possible till the word of command was given from headquarters. Yet such was the tension of the situation that York, the commander of Napoleon's Prussian contingent, was impelled to sacrifice an intense attachment to military subordi-

\* "Democracy in Europe," i., lviii.

† At the time of their inception the new armies were suspected of directly encouraging democracy. Both Wellington and Alexander expressed fear that the monarchical authority in Prussia, would be shaken by the citizen army acting as if it were a French national guard.—Treitschke, *Deutsche Gesch.*, ii. 129.

nation by concluding on his own responsibility a convention of neutrality with the Russian general. This loyal act of mutiny precipitated the inevitable rupture. Though the Prussian Government repudiated the convention and apologised to Napoleon, it prepared to pass over to the enemy; and Frederick William, accompanied by his councillors of war, repaired to the neighbourhood of Alexander. Two months after the convention of Tauroggen, all prudential reserve was abandoned, and the two monarchs concluded the treaty of Kalisch with the purpose of together prosecuting the war till Prussia had recovered an equivalent to its lost territories.

Thus officially declared, the war of liberation was borne along with popular impetuosity. Already Stein had been enabled by the prevailing enthusiasm to organise the Landwehr in East Prussia, notwithstanding his irregular credentials and rough manners; and now volunteers flocked from all sides to the recruiting stations. The people were almost offended by the proclamation of conscription when voluntary enlistment more than sufficed to fill the ranks. Contributions to the impoverished government were gladly yielded; and one still finds in Prussian families silver bearing evidence that it was returned from the abundance offered to the State at this time. Most eager for the fray were the students and educated classes, those who astonished the Parisians by thronging to the Louvre when victory had been won by sheer fighting. Yet none were too mean to participate in the joy of insurrection, none too poor to leave their homes for the war. Some even sold everything they

possessed to arm themselves as volunteers, and wealthless maidens were known to cut off their now unregarded locks in order to get a mite for the national cause. Supported by this enthusiasm, Scharnhorst's scheme rapidly organised the whole available manhood of the country; and his *bourgeoisie armée*, as Napoleon contemptuously called it, soon counted a combatant for every seventeen inhabitants, exclusive of the reinforcements obtained during the war.\*

At first, however, Napoleon had to deal with only their vanguard. Before the retreat from Moscow had terminated, he had hurried to Paris, and raised another large army, with which he amalgamated the fugitives and garrisons in Germany. Operating with superior numbers, his strategy defeated the allies at Gross Görschen and Bautzen, but his want of cavalry prevented him from making his advantage decisive. Both sides then sought to improve their position by an armistice. Napoleon obtained more cavalry, with the services of Murat to lead it, and he tried to overawe his father-in-law by bringing up troops from Italy. The allies received reinforcements, and treated for the support of Austria. Now it was no more the Austrian policy to enable Prussia and Russia to crush Napoleon than it was to save him from acknowledging some limitation to his authority. At Reichenbach, therefore, Metternich engaged to join the Allies if his proposals for a peace were rejected by the French Emperor; and at Prague a

\* Treitschke, i. 430. Häusser puts the number at one in eighteen.



Congress was assembled to consider its terms. But concession formed no part of Napoleon's tactics; and the Congress was dissolved by efflux of time. The Austrian forces took the field with those of Prussia and Russia; Sweden declared war against France; and England disbursed money among the Allies. With great daring and rapidity Napoleon attacked in turn the separate armies of his opponents, but the inferiority of his troops in number and quality rendered unavailing his efforts to prevent the Allies from closing around him. In two engagements he suffered defeat, and, though he repulsed with great loss an assault on his headquarters at Dresden, his position grew so hazardous that the Bavarians and most of his German contingents deserted to the enemy. By the middle of October he was brought to bay at Leipzig, when the *völkerschlacht*, the battle between a man and the nations, was decided by mere weight of numbers to the complete discomfiture of the French.

Again Napoleon returned to Paris to collect a new army; again the Allies strove to arrange a durable peace. The combined monarchs were not of stout heart, and their interests were far from identical. They only agreed in wishing to make Napoleon yield enough of his conquests to bring Europe into a tolerable state of equilibrium. But the child of fortune received their advances only to gain time. With marvellous obstinacy he held to the belief in his own invincibility. All Germany was against him; Denmark declared itself his enemy; Murat abandoned his cause, for in Italy

the French arms had met with reverse; Wellington was crossing the Southern frontier; and his last army had been shattered. Yet he preferred the risks of a perilously unequal campaign to the assured results of an advantageous compromise. Nevertheless, though favoured by the reluctance of Austria to consent to his overthrow, and the consequent purposeless movements of the Allies; though he handled his raw conscripts with masterly skill; though he won victories and extorted from the divided monarchs more offers of peace; he was at last reduced to a poor shift for diverting the advance on Paris which he could not obstruct. The manœuvre failed to retard the attack on the capital; and on the last day of March the Tsar and the King of Prussia entered the city in triumph: When convinced that Paris must fall, Napoleon proceeded alone to Fontainebleau, and there offered to abdicate in favour of his son. On an unconditional abdication being demanded, he grudgingly acquiesced in the utter collapse of his fortunes by accepting Elba for a kingdom, four hundred of his guardsmen for an army, and two million francs for a revenue.

With the downfall of the Empire closed the triumphant period of the Revolution. With the exile of Napoleon began the course of reaction, compromise, and tentative advance. As soon as the Allies had overthrown the Imperial government they were met by the perplexities of supplying an acceptable substitute. Their presence as conquerors repressed any spontaneous effort or utterance on the part of the people; and neither man

nor party existed that could pretend to popular confidence. But there was one politician to whom tact, cunning, and fortune had reserved some influence, though his career had robbed him of all representative character. Talleyrand had been as ever in advance of the vicissitudes of the State; and when the monarchs entered Paris he was ready to mediate between their wishes, the inclinations of the people, or, rather, middle classes, and the actual circumstances of the fallen Empire. Under his presidency a provisional government was formed from Napoleon's senate, the Emperor's dethronement was decreed, and a constitution was drawn up in the name of the people recalling the head of the House of Bourbon to be king of France. He was too clear-sighted to regard with favour a regency under Marie Louise, or a crown on one of Napoleon's marshals; and it was through his sagacity and adroitness that the remaining alternative of a restoration, which minor causes had conspired to promote, was definitively elected.

If Talleyrand showed how much the most momentous matters were still to be controlled by astute statesmen, Alexander emphatically declared that respect must be paid to the claims of the people. No termination to this period of the Revolution could have displayed more clearly the futility of hopes for instant political reform than the spectacle of a monarchical restoration being superintended by the wildest veteran in the revolutionary service, and the people's cause being guarded by the autocrat of all the Russias. That the French people should have a liberal form of

government was at this moment the prevailing purpose in the Tsar's mind; and his position made him almost supreme arbiter in the matter. Not only did he see that a constitution was formally drawn up for the acceptance of Louis XVIII., but he very firmly insisted that the Count d'Artois, who was first in the field as his brother's Lieutenant-general of the kingdom, and Louis himself, should consent to the principle of constitutional government. Yet he was unable to induce the Bourbons to forget anything or to learn anything; and since, by consenting to the recall of the dynasty he had countenanced its indefeasible claim to the crown, he was obliged to be satisfied when Louis made his concessions in the exercise of his royal authority.\* This perversion of the principle of the restoration was not, however, closely examined by the people. They were not then disposed to criticise very carefully the proclamation promising them political freedom. As the following years were to prove, the bourgeois classes were now the chief custodians of public opinion; and they, bereft of all settled convictions by past disappointments, harassed through the late catastrophes by a sense of insecurity, were glad to accept any form of government which could advance some claim to legitimacy and would at least obviate a return to revolutionary turmoil. After the fashion of their race they suddenly rallied round the new King. They remembered him as the kindly Count of

\* Vitrolles, in his recently published memoirs, contradicts the general statement that Alexander brought direct pressure to bear on the King.

Provence; they bravely forgot his want of heroic qualities; and they strove to glorify the establishment of his rule by an enthusiastic reception. And when, in accordance with Alexander's demand for a better guarantee, a royal commission drew up a charter which Louis ratified as his free gift to the nation, they forbore from commenting on its monarchical variations from the Senate's constitution, but received as genuine the Bourbon pledges though given in the Bourbon style.

The victorious Powers on their side did all that was possible to reconcile the French with the new government. Everything was done to show that they treated France not as a conquered belligerent but as a country emancipated from a despotism. During the late war the Allies had announced that they were hostile to Napoleon alone, and that they desired to leave France all its original power and territory. By the first Peace of Paris they fulfilled their promise by disregarding Prussia's vehement demands for a better defence of Germany, and adopting the French frontier of 1792 with some slight additions. They also spared the Bourbon government the burden of an indemnity; they left it the custody of nearly all the spoils which twenty years of plunder had accumulated; and they presented it with most of the colonies which had fallen into the hands of England.

Nevertheless, the Bourbons failed to secure the affections of the people, though they received the outward show of allegiance. Personally they were without charm; as a party they repelled by claiming their ancient heritage; as a governing ministry

they offended by equal want of tact and candour. Certainly Louis XVIII. simulated a regard for the departed Empire by forming a government of Royalists and Imperialists, but in fact he only retained Bonapartists in offices where their knowledge of business made them indispensable, and he instituted his own followers in capacities where their uncompromising spirit made them most obnoxious. Soon grave suspicions were entertained of his sincerity in granting the charter, for when it was recited to the Parliament an infraction of the article providing for the liberty of the press was demanded and extorted by the government; while measures were openly discussed for securing to the returned immigrants their confiscated property at the cost of destitution to thousands of families. Towards the army the new government was especially impolitic. Napoleon's veterans found nothing to respect in the obese and unsoldierly Louis, and their contempt was soon turned into ill-humour when disbandment brought many thousands of them from a relatively high military rank to the low level of their social status, and when the revival of old corps of the monarchy decked out Royalist youths, who had never smelt powder, as the *élite* of the French army. In the ranks and among the people a strong dislike of the King, who had mounted the throne on the nation's defeat, was thus propagated; and the exile of Elba was yearningly referred to as *père la violette*, in hopes that he would return at springtime. Hence when Napoleon did appear again in France he was surrounded by the army, greeted by the populace, and distrustfully accepted

even by the middle classes. No one regretted the flight of the Bourbons; many saw prospects of revenge and glory in the restoration of the Empire; and only the wealthier citizens dreaded the consequences of a new war.

None the less was the moment unfavourable to Napoleon's venture. Aware that the Powers had fallen into dissensions at the Congress of Vienna, persuaded that the Bourbons had made themselves unpopular, he forgot that France was exhausted and weary of war, and he failed to realise that the Allies were still at one with regard to him. But his was not the nature to wait till the armies of his enemies were reduced, till the terror of his name had diminished, till the folly of the Bourbons had made them intolerable to their subjects. Less than a year after his banishment he landed near Cannes with a few hundred trusty followers. His presence frightened Louis first into liberal concessions, and then into ignominious flight. Once more he occupied the imperial throne. Heedful, however, of men's leanings towards constitutionalism, he promulgated an additional act to the constitution of the Empire, and convoked the *Champ de Mai* to show that the period of absolutism had ceased. Naturally his declarations met with little faith; nor were his peaceful professions more successful. The monarchs refused to receive his despatches; they denounced as an outlaw Napoleon Bonaparte, as they called the man whom they had expressly permitted to retain the title of Emperor; at first they declared against him as a traitor by promising Louis help to quell rebellion. And if they had

been disposed to admit that later events proved him to be the elect of the people, and that it was his evident interest to maintain peace at any rate for a time, Murat's action would have held them to their resolve to deprive him again of power. For the King of Naples had deserted his brother-in-law, not only to escape participating in the downfall of the Empire, but to secure, if possible, the reward of additional territory; and when he found that he had been duped by Austria, and was in danger of being dethroned by the Congress, he disregarded Napoleon's directions to abstain from taking the offensive, and marched against the Austrians as soon as he heard of the Emperor's reception in France. But defeat brought to nought his design to do some great service for his patron by mastering the whole peninsula; while the Emperor, though convinced that war was inevitable, refused his proffered services, and bade him atone in retirement for his inconstant and headstrong behaviour till the conflict had been decided.

Willingly and yet unwillingly Napoleon left the capital for his last campaign. Gladly he escaped from the obligation of personally submitting to democratic opinion and constitutional institutions; eagerly he hoped to return in victory to crush the wanton element beneath his former yoke. But it was with some apprehension that he entered into a new war with Europe, for his army, though composed chiefly of veterans returned from garrison duty and foreign captivity, was far too small to cope with the united forces of his opponents; and he knew that revolution at home was imminent in case of reverse.



He retained, moreover, only a portion of the decision and energy which had subdued the continent. Yet his immediate overthrow was not achieved by force of numbers, nor were his rapid movements without success. Both Wellington and Blücher were disconcerted by his sudden onset; and at Waterloo he launched forth his legions in startling combinations after the bold and direct fashion which in late years had especially characterised his tactics. In numerical strength he was not taken at a disadvantage, till the Prussian attack which decided his last field. Throughout the campaign, however, he under-estimated the foe he had to deal with. Blücher's rally after Ligny, and his courageous advance from Wavre to Wellington's help, never came within his calculations; and assuredly he would not have delayed till midday the attack on Wellington's army if he had suspected that the English would hold their ground against the charges of his veterans, and that the Prussians would elude Grouchy and arrive on the field of battle. Met by the shock of a stubborn resistance, his army was shattered beyond the possibility of an orderly retreat; and his last venture terminated in a wild flight before the hosts of Austria and Russia had been able to take part in the war.

When Napoleon reached Paris, opposition from his former supporters and the Chamber of Deputies compelled him to abdicate a second time; and he regretfully retired before the dangers which threatened him till he surrendered himself to a British ship of war. Thenceforward this mightiest of history's instruments remained dead to the

world in an irksome captivity till on May 5th, 1821, disease freed him from a life of pain and discontent. The Chamber of Deputies at once proceeded to form a provisional government, which obviated further bloodshed by concluding a capitulation of the city to the Allies on condition that the property and persons of the inhabitants should be respected. The Chamber then turned its attention to the establishment of a permanent constitution; but time permitted only an expression of strong aversion to the Bourbons when Louis XVIII. returned as rightful sovereign, and frustrated the schemes of the Liberals and the plans of the Allies by resuming the governing power. But this second restoration was no more a victory of unaided Bourbon pretension and policy than the first. Louis regained his crown thus readily only through the services of Fouché, who, with the Duke of Wellington, facilitated the King's return, as Talleyrand had on the earlier occasion. Nor did the craft of the Duke of Otranto fail him. As president of the Provisional Government he inveighed against the Bourbons, but secretly he intrigued for their return. He saw full well that prompt action on the part of the King would bring him back to power as a matter of course; and he was determined to get the advantage of being the one to help the ruler of France on his throne again. Hence he managed that Louis entered Paris in good time to welcome as reinstated host the allied monarchs; while he himself, regicide though he was, became once more Minister of Police.

The warning of the Hundred Days sufficed not to prevent the Bourbons from continuing to commit blunders of perversity and incapacity; but circumstances condoned their faults till Louis XVIII. was incontestably seated on the throne of France. They even enjoyed the benefit of a great revulsion of public feeling in their favour. The new parliament, the popular chamber of which was made more representative, was principally composed of fanatical Royalists burning to extirpate Bonapartism and Republicanism alike. In the southern provinces massacre and persecution were meted out to all who were attached to the Republic, the Empire, or, in revenge for the toleration of these *régimes*, to Protestantism. A new reign of terror was inaugurated by the extreme Royalists and Catholics. The King's government strove to impart more moderation to the dominant party; and Talleyrand and Fouché were able to extend the services to political moderation by which in later years they had atoned for much of their earlier career. But revenge was not to be denied victims. Several distinguished men were executed or banished, and a great number of persons were imprisoned or dismissed from their offices. In such an atmosphere it was impossible for the ministry of Talleyrand and Fouché to exist. It was not Talleyrand who signed the second Peace of Paris, but the Duc de Richelieu; and it was not Fouché who superintended the police measures, but Decazes. Their fall symbolised the triumph of the reaction. The reaction, expressing as it did a partial reversion of the national mind to

the old monarchical system after twenty-five years of blind experiments, containing as it did the numerous and diverse elements which these years of change had irrevocably incorporated into French life, surrounded as it was by fundamental consequences of the Revolution which the researches of the historian alone have been able to reveal fully by contrast with the old order, actuated as it was more by a weariness of war than by a love of peace,—this reaction, with all its attendant illusions, anomalies, and animosities, formed for better or worse the groundwork of modern France.

The collapse of the French domination of Europe involved the revision of that system of political geography which French conquest had imposed and maintained. Most of the changes wrought by the revolutionary wars were too firmly established and too consistent with natural conditions to be cancelled by the most zealous reactionists ; but, nevertheless, when the Powers had recovered their autonomy, it was necessary for them to review their altered position in order to ratify what was desirable or past recall, and to correct what seemed to them unsatisfactory and revocable. With regard to France itself these questions were definitively settled by the second Peace of Paris with the same forbearance which characterised the terms of the first treaty. For it was thought that the balance of power required France to be strong as formerly, while the disputes at the Congress of Vienna had inclined all to discountenance the pretensions of Prussia, whose elation had added an offensively overweening demeanour to genuine

importunity for protection. Moreover England and Russia, who were the real masters of the situation, were determined to spare France as much as possible. The British government desired to conciliate the French nation and to hand over to the Bourbons their full inheritance; while the Tsar, deaf to the representations of Stein, and engrossed with the dreams of religious enthusiasm, acted with chivalrous generosity under the influence of Madame Krüdener, who was skilfully made to plead the cause of the fallen nation. Yet the Allies were constrained to hold the country responsible for Napoleon's rebellion against their decisions by administering some punishment, lenient though it might be. Besides quartering an army of occupation in the fortresses on the northern and eastern frontiers, they inflicted on the French a pecuniary fine which seemed considerable enough in itself but was insignificant when compared with the extortions which Prussia and other states had suffered at the hands of Napoleon. Following the initiative of Blücher they sanctioned the appropriation by the original owners of the plundered spoils. In defiance of Prussia's reiterated appeals for some substantial guarantee against French aggression, the same tribunal exacted no greater territorial cessions than the last fragment of Savoy to Sardinia; Phillipeville, Marienburg, and the duchy of Bouillon, to the new kingdom of the Netherlands; Saar-Louis, Saar-Brück, and Landau, with attendant territory, to Prussia and Bavaria; and a part of Gex to Switzerland,—cessions involving the loss of half-a-million of inhabitants. These

conditions were the easiest which the Duc de Richelieu, an excellent emigré who had won the esteem and respect of Alexander during many years of administration in the Crimea, could obtain by personal influence after intrigue and diplomacy had reduced as low as possible the questions at issue. The only country, equally with Prussia dissatisfied by this arrangement, was France itself. Accustomed to participate in the glory of Napoleon's enterprises, the French keenly felt his humiliation; but with naïve inconsistency they repudiated all liability therein, and experienced at once the chagrin of defeat and the grievance of unjust retribution.

A resettlement of the rest of Europe was provided for by the first Peace of Paris; and a congress of the Powers met at Vienna in November of the following year to determine its details. The occasion was naturally one of great display and festivity. When, after wars protracted and extended beyond any recorded in authentic history, all the great ones of Europe, the rulers and plenipotentiaries of every state except Turkey, met to agree upon the conditions of a general pacification, a welcome opportunity was afforded to rank and wealth to celebrate with profuse indulgence the return of peace to the harassed peoples. The occasion also invited serious consideration of the weal of nations. Never before had rulers been given a better opportunity for arriving in unison at plans for the better discharge of their trust. Never before had European society been in such a plastic condition; never had more enlightened statesman-

ship been at the command of law-givers and diplomatists. But the time when reforms came from above was past; now princes were to be either executors of the people's mandates or jealous guardians of their own dynastic interests. In the fever of reaction, when the monarchs had not recovered from their terror of the Revolution, when the menaces of its dictator were still ringing in their ears, they gave small heed to their fiduciary position and abandoned themselves to a panic of self-preservation. Fitly enough did they meet in the capital of the Hapsburgs. Here as guests of a dynasty, which had risen to the proudest rank by trafficking in diverse races, they surveyed the wreck of the fallen Empire, and disputed with one another over the fragments at disposal without regard to national needs and feelings. "At Vienna," laments Gervinus, "there was a statistical, but no national, committee." \* Yet this policy wanted not a principle. The princes pleaded their titles by the grace of God, though some wore crowns by the favour of Napoleon; and thence they supported their claims by the argument which Talleyrand dignified with the name of legitimacy. Fouché hoped that the new catchword would be less productive of woe than equality had been; and at one stage of the debate it seemed that Europe's troubles would be immediately renewed by the principle's adherents themselves. But the Congress escaped from a violent disruption to bring forth in due time its fully matured fruit of conflict and distress; and it dispersed leaving its

\* *Geschichte des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, i. 254.

most authoritative decisions to be cancelled within sixty years by the sufferings of the peoples whose victory it had assembled to convert into a lasting peace.

Hence the great democratic movement came to strengthen temporarily the chief absolute monarchies. Russia not only kept Finland and Bessarabia, with the part of Moldavia it had conquered from Turkey,\* but it succeeded in getting the Duchy of Warsaw with the exception of the western portion, which came to Prussia as the Grand-duchy of Posen, and Cracow, which with a small territory was made an independent republic under the protection of the neighbouring Powers. This arrangement was only arrived at with much difficulty on account of Alexander's schemes for erecting a new kingdom of Poland; but most dangerously provocative of contention were the demands of Prussia. This state had been promised a restoration of power which should make it equal to what it was before the Peace of Tilsit, but it considered that its deeds in the War of Liberation entitled it to an accession of strength. Its statesmen then forgot, and its historians do not perceive now, how contemptible it appeared to the world from the beginning of the revolutionary wars to the insurrection of 1813, and how slightly its fortunate effort was appreciated by contemporaries in consequence. Its demand for the whole of Saxony accordingly encountered all the hostility which jealousy and conflicting interests could engender, without enlisting any impartial support. The position of Saxony was dubious.

\* See *infra*, p. 292.



Its king had insisted upon adhering to the cause of Napoleon till he had been taken prisoner by the Allies after Leipzig. As a German state Saxony was guilty of treason against the German nation; but then it was doubtful whether there was a German nation against which treason could be committed. To other states independence had been guaranteed late in the war; and if Saxony had a sovereign right to wage war as it chose, there seemed no reason why its king should not retain with the rest his Divinely delegated commission after having atoned for his defeat. In the end Prussia got the larger but more thinly populated half of Saxony, which with the Duchy of Posen, Swedish Pomerania, most of its former possessions between the Elbe and the Rhine, Westphalia, the greater part of the old Electorate of Köln, with the cities of Aachen, Münster, Trier, and Paderborn, the territories of Dietz, Siegen, Hadamar, and Dillenburg, and some French departments on the Mosel and the Maas, gave it a larger population, though not so large an area of territory, than before. It was divided into two portions of unequal size with insecure frontiers, but it was much more compact than after the last partition of Poland, and its population, though two-fifths Catholic and three-fifths Protestant, was now almost entirely German.

If Prussia thus unwittingly laid the foundation of a future German Empire, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was believed by Metternich to be invested with a permanent supremacy in central Europe and the Italian peninsula. So profitably

had the wily minister preyed upon the necessities of the Allies before consenting to join them in the war of 1813, that this state, which had done least to win the common victory, emerged from its misfortunes with some millions of subjects more than it possessed in 1792. While it renounced its former troublesome province of Belgium and its positions in south-west Germany, it received back all that Napoleon had taken from it, together with the old Venetian states, except the Ionian Islands. Italy was so parcelled out that Tuscany was given to the Archduke Ferdinand, a brother of the Austrian Emperor ; Modena to the Archduke Francois d'Este, his cousin ; while Parma, Piacenza, and Guastella were given to his daughter, Marie Louise, Napoleon's consort, who retained the title of Empress. The Pope received back his former provinces, but he was obliged to grant to the Austrians the right of garrisoning Ferrara and Comacchio. Lucca was given to the ex-Queen of Etruria. Naples, after the overthrow of Murat, was handed over by the Austrians to its Bourbon king, Ferdinand IV., who had spent the last ten years in Sicily. Unfavourable only to Austrian influence was the return of the King of Sardinia to the continent, who received besides Piedmont, Savoy, and Nice, the former republic of Genoa.

In the settlement of Germany Metternich's tactics were also successful. As a condition of Austrian support in the late war he had obliged the Allies, who had threatened to dethrone all Napoleon's German vassals if they did not at once come over to their side, to engage to respect the independence

of the Rheinbund states. In the first treaty of Paris, it was provided that Germany should be ruled by a number of sovereigns united by federation. Agreeably to these pledges Saxony retained the dignity of a kingdom with the remnant of its territory ; Bavaria received in compensation for its restorations to Austria, Würzburg, Aschaffenburg, the Rheinpfalz, and a part of Fulda ; Hanover received from Prussia Hildesheim, Goslar, East Friesland, Lingen, and some smaller bits of territory, while its Elector took the title of king ; the Grand-Duke of Hesse received, for his losses to Prussia, Mainz with some adjoining country ; the Dukes of Weimar, Oldenburg, and Mecklenburg became Grand-dukes, and the kings of Napoleonic origin remained kings still. Germany's political institutions were thus reduced to two military monarchies, four kingdoms, one electorate, six grand-duchies, fourteen duchies and principalities, and the four free towns, Bremen, Hamburg, Lübeck, and Frankfurt-on-Main. This distribution of sovereign power represented a great advance in organisation since the pre-revolutionary epoch, but it afforded no practicable basis for the erection of a sound national polity. Its disparate elements could only furnish the materials for a federative constitution of small tensile strength. Such a substitute for the old empire was well adapted to Metternich's purposes. Austria's diplomatic position assured it the advantage over its rival in unconstrained dealing with the smaller states. With them it envied and dreaded the aggrandisement of the Hohenzollerns, with them it sought

to restrain Prussian encroachment by fortifying the independence of the minor princes; while its widely extended interests and absolute *régime* rendered it grateful to the jealous potentates, and less capable of being suspected of predatory designs against their sovereignty. Proposals of reactionary enthusiasts for a restoration of the Holy Roman Empire were readily disposed of by the unwillingness of Austria and every one else to submit to its unprofitable obligations and restraints; schemes like Stein's for the subjection of the States to a supreme national parliament were decisively negated by the spirit which induced Würtemberg and Bavaria to declare that their peoples and Prussia's could never be assimilated into one nationality. After some months spent in useless discussion, Metternich carried through his plan for confirming the German princes in their absolute rights at home, and checking them with the least possible number of bonds to the collective total of the nation. A *Deutscher Bund* was formed, for the purpose of preserving the security of Germany from without, and the integrity of the single States within; it was adorned with an ostensible provision for popular representation in the government of the different States; but the worth of its disciplinary articles was made to depend on the authority of a Diet at Frankfurt-on-Main, presided over by the plenipotentiary of the Emperor of Austria.

With a view to erecting a barrier to France on the north, the Congress united Belgium and Holland into a kingdom for the Prince of Orange.

The Prince also received the Grand-duchy of Luxemburg as an indemnity for his Nassau possessions, which were transferred to Prussia. He took the title of William I. of the United Netherlands; but the union was glaringly ill-assorted, and his kingdom contained from the first the elements of disruption. To Sweden was ceded Norway by the Danes \* in return for Swedish Pomerania and the Isle of Rügen, which were then handed over to Prussia for the small consideration of Lauenberg and two million thalers. The frontiers of Spain, Portugal, and Turkey were left untouched. Switzerland was found to require but little change in its constitution, though the meddlesome interference of Austria provoked a reactionary agitation. Three cantons, Neufchatel, Wallis, and Geneva, were added to the nineteen; and the whole number were united into a Swiss Confederation.

From the dispensation, which thus finally set out the territorial groundwork of modern Europe, England could only receive permission to retain Malta, Heligoland, the Cape of Good Hope, Guiana, Mauritius, and a few other of its conquests, while it was entrusted with the protection, or rather temporary dominion, of the republic of the Ionian Isles. But what material aggrandisement an insular character obliged it to forego, was fully equalled by the prestige and moral influence which its fortitude and efforts had deservedly earned. Having entered into conflict with a reputation blemished by the mishaps of the latter part of last century, Great Britain had emerged as a heroic

\* See *infra*, p. 290.

example for all continental peoples. It had won that respect which for long was to give weight to unarmed utterance ; and it was in only bare conformity with its recent tutelary conduct that the last act of the English government, before withdrawing from active participation in continental affairs, was to chastise the Algerian corsairs, who had abstained from attacking British commerce in order to prey the more securely upon those marines which had been deprived of protection by the fortunes of naval war.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE QUICKENING OF GERMANY, ITALY, AND SPAIN.

DIE THIÈRE. "O sei doch so gut,  
Mit Schweiss und mit Blut  
Die Krone zu leimen!"

*(Sie gehen ungeschickt mit der Krone um und zerbrechen  
sie in zwei Stücke mit welchen sie herumspringen.)*

"Nun ist es geschehen!  
Wir reden und sehn,  
Wir hören und reimen!"

Und wenn es uns glückt,  
Und wenn es sich schickt,  
So sind es Gedanken."

*Goethe.*

It is a very shortsighted opinion which pronounces Napoleon to be the negator of the Revolution, the avenger of the dishonoured and maltreated past. Though he was a scorner of democracy, an expounder of a ruthless creed of despotism and brute force, he was yet the most successful interpreter and most cogent enforcer of the "rights of man." Blood and deceit were his weapons, personal supremacy his aim, but he was compelled by what was true and inevitable in the Revolution to employ his power for the enfranchisement of peoples, to practise law and justice together with sanguinary villainy, and to dispense the blessings of equality

at the same time that he extorted the abject submission of the conquered. In spite of his evil self, he was the armed propagator of a more generous social order. Like Mephistopheles, he was

" Ein Theil von jener Kraft,  
Die stets das Böse will und stets das Gute schafft."

Without him it is doubtful whether France would have embraced irrevocably the Revolution's maxims of natural equity and human freedom before submitting to a restoration; without him it is certain that the peoples of Germany, Italy, and Spain, would have travailed long ere they extricated themselves from the barbarism of the feudal ages.

In no part of Europe did the Empire's fall obliterate all the good that it had bestowed with the bad; but in the States of the Rheinbund Napoleon's influence left most effects of substantial value. These States, which he had consolidated and strengthened, became more ambitious to play a respectable part in the government of Europe. The crowns strove to overcome finally the feudal nobility; and in trying to exercise absolute sovereignty they approached the impartial rule of the Imperial system of administration. In some instances the efforts of a small principality to ape an empire were simply ludicrous, but in most the result was beneficial to subjects and rulers alike. Along with the torpor of government were removed the shackles of the people. The mediæval order was almost entirely repudiated. Serfage, privileges, petty tyranny, and perverted justice, were generally exchanged for the Code, equable taxation, and



the common right of all to serve their State. Advantage, too, redounded to the nation as a whole as well as to its divisions. French innovations destroyed incurious reverence for the existent. By summarily amalgamating Electorates, Free Towns, and Bishoprics, Napoleon forced Germans to abate somewhat of their hatreds and jealousies, and to regard one another as countrymen, at least in relation to foreigners. The War of Liberation banded them together for once in behalf of a common cause. Furthermore, if it be true that to present clearly a question is to go halfway to its answer, his supremacy half solved the great problem of German politics in this century. As long as the form of the old Empire remained, the conditions of a new and real one were obscured to common vision; but with the destruction of the venerable shape, it became evident that what Germany wanted was a powerful leader of its own, who would force the smaller States to sink their rivalries in submission to the whole as represented by its greatest constituent.

In different States the quickening movement varied in character and persistence. Bavaria, for example, presented the most advanced form of innovation. Remarkable for bigotry and ignorance, it had lately passed to the tolerant house of Zweibrücken, and was now increased by the addition of much Protestant territory. Max Joseph, the reigning sovereign, though a good-hearted man, possessed no political aptitude; but his minister Montgelas was an energetic and determined disciple of French enlightenment, and an ardent promoter

of Bavaria's greatness by help of France. It was indeed time that the country should reap some benefit from its tendency towards such a connection; and Montgelas secured to it something more durable than accession of territory. He attacked ecclesiastical property, initiated the suppression of the knights of the Empire, abolished serfage and class privileges, and centralised the administration. Würtemberg's king, on the other hand, imposed his reforms in such an arbitrary manner that, notwithstanding his ability and the need of change throughout his new kingdom, his subjects were at the time conscious only of his tyranny and the burdens of French suzerainty. The subjects of Jerome Bonaparte, king of Westphalia, suffered more than ordinary extortion from Napoleon, and also experienced all the evils which could be produced by the rule and favourites of the one Bonaparte, who was too vicious and careless to be worthy of a crown. In Baden, where devotion to French models was strongest, Charles Frederick contrived to obtain for the people an unusual proportion of benefit. In Saxony, on the contrary, the instincts of the king and his well-to-do burghers forbade any change; and in Mecklenburg, the stronghold of the feudal nobility, the representatives of the oldest sovereign house in the Western world were powerless to take advantage of the prevailing current of events. Where, too, the country had been brought directly under French administration, as in Hanover and Kurhessen, the return of the old rulers was accompanied by determined efforts to efface the work of the usurpers; yet

Prussia, though its jurisprudence was of Frederick's making, found reason to retain the Code Napoléon in its Rhenish Provinces. One special consequence of French domination, however, seems to have been more or less operative throughout Germany. The ease with which the new France trampled under foot the old Empire, the old Austria, and the old Prussia, induced everywhere a disposition to regard hopefully any changes which promised to import a democratic element into government. The same fact called upon the rulers to compete with the semblance of popular institutions which the French introduced wherever they went; and Hardenberg could find no more plausible excuse for rashly pledging the Prussian crown to a national representation than the expediency of distancing the dangerous Westphalian neighbour in the estimation of public opinion. Hence the solemn acknowledgment of Germany's debt to France, which many of its sovereigns made when they bid for the support of their subjects in the War of Liberation by promises of constitutional government; hence the famous thirteenth article of the *Bundesacte*, which ordained that a representative constitution should be introduced into all German States.\*

At the same time that this metamorphosis of an aggregate of States was preparing the basis for an united Germany, the regeneration of a single monarchy provided for the erection of a German Empire. It was after the Peace of Tilsit, when a large French army was quartered on what was left

\* "In allen Bundesstaaten wird eine landesständische Verfassung Statt finden."—Martens, *Recueil*, vi. 345.

of its territory, and an enormous indemnity was being levied on its people, that Prussia shook off its lethargy and entered the path of reform which was to lead it to the headship of the nation. To rescue the State from succumbing in the fierce struggle for existence, by which the Revolution was improving the type of all surviving institutions, the Freiherr von Stein was invested with very great discretionary powers. Adversity had made his energy, boldness, and perception acceptable to the king, to whom personally he was not a congenial minister; and it was this adversity which Stein and his colleagues combated by starting from the "fundamental idea of rousing a moral, religious, patriotic spirit in the nation, of inspiring it anew with courage, self-confidence, readiness for every sacrifice in the cause of independence of the foreigner and of national honour, and of seizing the first favourable opportunity of beginning the bloody and hazardous struggle for both." \*

Versé in the doctrines of Adam Smith and the lessons of English history, they first sought to improve the social and economical condition of Prussia by conferring on its inhabitants a just measure of individual liberty. A commission of Hardenberg's had nearly completed the draft of an Edict of Emancipation when Stein entered office; and it was the Freiherr's merit to have suffered not a week's delay before making it law. Prior to its publication, villeinage, based originally on the manorial system of conferring on the

\* Stein's words, cited by Seeley, *Life and Times of Stein*, Vol. I., p. 356.

squires judiciary and police functions,\* ranging from absolute servitude to a more usual system of recognised services and dues from the peasant to his lord, was the condition of the workers of the soil in the Prussian monarchy. On this point the Edict decreed† that no new relation of villeinage, either by birth, marriage, or acquisition of a villein holding can be created; all persons holding by hereditary tenures cease, they and their wives and children, to be villeins; from Martinmas 1810 every remaining form of villeinage shall cease; and from that date there shall be none but freemen in the Prussian dominions. Formerly, too, the land had been divided into portions confined to the nobles, burghers, and peasants, respectively; land and people went together, both being carefully distinguished into lots and kept in separate categories. The edict decreed that every inhabitant is, as far as the State is concerned, henceforth free to acquire and own landed property of every kind and description; that every noble, without derogation from his rank, is henceforth free to exercise the trades and callings of a burgher, while the burgher may become peasant, the peasant burgher. Besides some other provisions for facilitating the exchange of land, it was enacted that every entailed estate, whatever be the nature of that entail, can be freed from the entail by the consent of the family; and certain limitations were laid down to prevent the

\* Cf. Gneist : *Contemporary Review*, September 1885.

† See Morier's translation of the Edicts given in his essay in *Systems of Land Tenure*, published by the Cobden Club; and Seeley's translation, *loc. cit.* I., 442.

extinction of peasant holdings, for Stein was very apprehensive of "the covetousness of the rich and educated class," and he knew that to Prussia fighting power was of more consideration than opulence, a sturdy yeomanry than a thronging proletariat.

The Edict of Emancipation was no more than was necessary to remove the worst anachronisms which the stiff military *régime* of the Prussian monarchy had involved and maintained. More truly in advance was Stein's scheme for introducing a limited local self-government which should culminate in a kind of national representation. Of this he was able to realise only that part which related to the towns. At one time the German cities had been strongholds of burgher independence and freedom; but from various causes, of which war and the rise of military absolutism were chief, this healthy feeling had forsaken all the centres of industry except a few free towns. Bureaucratic servitude, with all its concomitant apathy, was now the political condition of most citizens; and in the late war the infantine helplessness of the Prussian towns had strikingly been exhibited when defeat had smitten with paralysis the mechanical officialism on which they were accustomed to rely. By Stein's municipal reform the citizens were entrusted with the care of their schools, public works, and poor. At first the torpid towns were shy of their new responsibilities, but when the War of Liberation threw the burghers on their own resources and forcibly introduced them to the invigorating experience of self-help,

a great awakening overtook Prussian civic life. A wholesome public feeling was aroused; and an instructive precedent was supplied to other German States for reviving in the towns the freer forms of the past.

On the other hand Stein was equally determined to "give to the administration of affairs the greatest possible unity, energy, and activity, to cause it to converge to a highest point, and in the simplest and most convenient manner to place at its disposal all the powers of the nation and the individual." \* To this end, the ordinance went on to announce, "the smallest possible number of officials will stand at the head of Departments simply and naturally assigned to the principal branches of administration; in closest connection with the Ruler they will guide the Departments according to his commands communicated to them directly, combining independence and free initiative with complete responsibility, and in this way they will work upon the administration of the lower organs, which will be formed in the same way." The decrees, which were to effect this change in the central and provincial administration, failed to embody all that he contemplated; and since then other alterations have considerably modified what he did accomplish; but still it is his work which fashioned anew the most excellent bureaucracy which ever served the cause of monarchy.

Although Stein's reforms were violently opposed by the aristocracy, his successor continued to carry

\* Introduction to the ordinance for the Reform of the Provincial Administration prepared by Stein.—Seeley, Vol. II., p. 208.

out a similar policy. After a meeting with the exiled patriot on the Bohemian frontier, Hardenberg issued two edicts which declared war against privilege, and committed the crown to a promise of a representation of the people for the provinces and the whole State. The nobility had welcomed the accession of Hardenberg to power because they had expected that he would reverse some of Stein's legislation ; but now, together with the removal of many restraints on trade and industry, he announced the equable taxation of all classes. Some of Hardenberg's measures were futile and ill-advised, and some were defeated by popular indifference, the hostility of the Junkerthum, or his own personal foibles, but many were reforms of permanent value. The Jews were emancipated ; and the guilds were abolished. Following the precedent, by which, soon after their liberation, the serfs of the royal domains had been transformed into free proprietors, an Edict for the regulation of the relations between lords of the manor and their peasants was issued. The Edict of Emancipation had left the freeman still subject to all obligations flowing from the possession of land : it was now enacted that all tenants of hereditary holdings shall become the absolute proprietors of their holdings after paying to the landlord an indemnity and surrendering their former claims on him.\* Two years were allowed for the voluntary negotiation of this commutation,

\* The rights lost by the landlords were right of ownership, claim to services, dues in money and kind, dead stock of farm, easements or servitudes on the land held : those surrendered by the tenant were claims to assistance in case of misfortune, right



at the end of which time the State promised to arrange all that were left unconcluded. The basis of the commutation was the surrender to the landlord by the peasants of land, money, money-rent, or corn-rent, to the amount of one-third of the value of the whole land in exchange for allodial ownership. The Edict treated, in much the same fashion, holdings at will, for a term of years, or for life; but the landlord's indemnity was raised in these cases to one-half. Accompanying this Edict came another for the better cultivation of land, which, on the principle that mobility of landed property favours the highest standard of agriculture, removed all restrictions on its free exchange, including those prescribed by the Emancipating Edict.

At first little was known of the step which Prussia had taken towards fitting itself for a civilising rôle; nor, when peace left this monarchy almost wholly German, abutting in one direction on aggressive France and in the other on the Russian Empire, did men understand that its interests must be those of the German nation. But the old suspicion and dislike remained as rife as before; for the dynasties were not less jealous of their sovereignty now that it had become more important. The presence of Austria encouraged these feelings. Though the idea that the nucleus of an united Germany could ever be found in the House of Hapsburg existed

to gather wood and other forest rights in the forest of the manor, claim for repairs of buildings and payment of public taxes in case of inability of the tenant, and pasturage rights on the demesne lands or forests.—See *Morier's Essay*.

only in the fancy of a few romanticists, yet its rivalry deprived Prussia of the moral weight which a claim to national leadership required. More adversely, the whole tenour of Austrian statesmanship was to maintain the principle of legitimacy against the pretensions of nationality whether raised by discontented peoples or espoused by ambitious monarchies. When Naples was transferred to the Bourbons, Ferdinand was bound by a secret treaty to tolerate no constitution or innovation repugnant to the old monarchical system, or the principles of Austrian administration in Lombardy.\* The reaction against the abortive reforms of Joseph II., and the pitiful conservatism of Francis himself, had effectually resisted everything pertaining to the Revolution except its armies. Even the enthusiasm of the War of Liberation had failed to elicit any response from the State whose monarch hoped to see his grandchild, the titular King of Rome, step into the inheritance of the Napoleonic Empire. Agitators against the French after the retreat from Moscow were arrested and banished by the Austrian government. Though a heroic effort had been made in the war of 1809, and Austria had on that occasion addressed for the first time the German nation in behalf of its independence, the noble words of invocation were uttered solely with a view to the discomfiture of the French; and Wagram caused a recoil of feeling which placed the people out of

\* The treaty is given by Gualterio, *Gli Ultimi Rivolgimenti Italiani*, ii. 11. It was published in the Neapolitan Parliament in 1820.—Springer, *Gesch. Oesterreichs*, i, 271.

sympathy with the Prussian patriots of 1813. Austria's standard of culture withheld its German subjects from spiritual communion with the rest of their race; and its press regulations were so constricting that the educated people of Vienna had to thank piratical reprints and the police of the national enemy during the French occupation in 1809 for access to the German classical literature. Naturally disposed to pleasure and ease, dispirited by the burdens of war and a terrible financial catastrophe, the Germans of Austria patiently accepted the intellectual pittance afforded by police, priests, and smugglers: they pined not for more invigorating mental food nor for a more generous political system; while their government studied to keep peoples submissive to their princes, and princes unmoved by national aspirations.

Great, then, as was Germany's gain from this period, it did not amount to more than a groundwork for subsequent development. For the present, no spontaneous popular force existed to remedy the faults of the political settlement. In some quarters the remembrance of the War of Liberation, and the national and constitutional hopes born of that time, lingered to suggest a more worthy fate for the German race; but public spirit and political insight were yet in too embryonic a state to enable the nation to take any considerable part in shaping its own destinies. The burgher population, the classes who in England and France were about to assert supremacy, though socially they had been emancipated, and intellectually they had been regenerated, though they had been thrown into

great industrial activity by the Continental System, were still lacking in the first qualities of effective citizens. Their sufferings from war, their difficulties when commerce resumed its proper channels, served to increase their lassitude. Their condition was in many most important respects greatly improved; but the great reward of their travail was to be reaped by another generation.

Like Germany, Italy dates the quickening of its national life from the dominion of Napoleon; and like Germany, its period of fruition was long deferred. But while in these and other respects the development of the two nations presents many points of resemblance, the essential conditions of the two processes varied in one important particular. Germany's protracted disintegration was principally due to the stubbornness of constituent elements; Italy's mainly to foreign servitude, and only secondarily to want of solidarity of feeling. At Vienna, German Powers virtually controlled German affairs; but Italy was surrendered to its old rulers by a congress of strangers before which, as a nation, it was entirely unrepresented. The Italians had much to learn before they could be masters of themselves: they had more to do before they could become their own rulers. Whereas Germany's prime need was unity, Italy's was autonomy; and this characteristic difference broadly distinguished the course of their development.

When the Revolution was darkly brewing over Europe, Italian literature began to throw off the craven spirit of dependence which centuries of degradation had induced in every department of

life. In the more serious branches of thought arose writers of European fame; and in the lighter functions of literature, talent protested in behalf of a more manly and moral conception of personal and social life. Parini initiated in style a return to reality, and chastened with delicate irony the prevailing vices and follies of the upper classes. Goldoni redeemed comedy from the slavery of imitation and the reproach of absurdity, with plays which owed their attractiveness as much to their conformity with the national character and manners as to the invention, gaiety, and humour of their author. Then came the fervid patriotism and passion for independence of Alfieri and Ugo Foscolo. Hence, when Bonaparte established the Cispadane Republic and celebrated the beauties of liberty, there were among the many, who could unintelligently ejaculate the revolutionary phrases, a few eager patriots to whom the words made the dream of Italian independence a vivid idea.\* And when the great conqueror extended his rule over the whole peninsula, his kinship, and the extermination of the strange rulers, suggested the thought of Italian independence and unity in quarters where the ideal possesses little power. Under the banners of the Emperor conscripts from every part of Italy fought side by side, and together won renown against the nations of Europe; under his protection the citizens enjoyed the same code of law, the same system of administration, taxation, and instruction. While the nation gained confidence in itself, it buried not a few of the jealousies bequeathed to it

\* Cf. Fyffe, *History of Modern Europe*, i. 125.

by the middle ages: while it learnt to prize civic equality, it rejoiced in the fancy of liberty. The weight of the French yoke lost much of its power to gall when feudal privileges availed no more, and burdens were equably distributed. It is true that of thirty thousand Italians who fought in Spain hardly nine thousand returned, and that of the twenty-seven thousand who entered Russia, scarcely one thousand reached home; but the people were accustomed to hardships, and though they dwelt upon them more than did spirited and ambitious members of the upper classes, their discontent did not invalidate the hopes which the leaders of public opinion discovered in the Napoleonic despotism.\*

Before these young national aspirations were outlawed by the Restoration, fortune enabled them to be recorded by the combined testimony of friend and foe. The ill-fated venture of Murat on the return of Napoleon from Elba is numbered by an historian of Italian independence as the first effort in its behalf. When the King of Naples issued his proclamation to the Italian nation, "from the Alps to the Straits of Scylla echoed one cry alone—Indipendenza d'Italia—this cry, which later in 1848-49 and in 1859-60, moved millions of Italians, drew thousands and thousands around the banner on which was written—Gloria, Dovere, Amor di patria." And when the restless soldier found his

\* Writing in 1825 Colletta said, "Se la intolleranza della servitù è un supplicio presente, ma un bene certo e futuro de' popoli, dèssa viene agl' Italiani dal dominio di Buonaparte, arbitrario, violento, ma pieno di effetti e di speranze."—*Storia di Napoli*, ii. 110.

death in a romantic attempt to oust the Bourbons from Naples after the battle of Waterloo, he fell, the first of those "who had the courage and the thought to proclaim the war of Italian Independence." \* Nor could his enemy afford to disregard his war-cry. Though the Emperor of Austria had declared that the Lombards must forget that they were Italians, and that his Italian provinces required to be united only by the bond of obedience to their Emperor; though Metternich openly plotted to quench the spirit of Italian liberty and union by disorganising the Italian army and repressing the name and institutions of the kingdom of Italy; yet, when the Austrian general, Bellegarde, was threatened by Murat and his inflammatory promises, a proclamation was issued to the Lombards avowing that "the Emperor, firm in his partiality to his Italian States, has determined upon the erection of a Lombardo-Venetian kingdom, as a peculiar crown land, whereby his Italian subjects will preserve their nationality which they with reason esteem so highly;" † and an imperial patent announced that a Viceroy would represent the Emperor with a regular constitution. This blast and counterblast, though the one was only instrumental in uniting an inconsiderable auxiliary force to the Neapolitan army,

\* Ghetti, *Storia della Indipendenza Italiana*, pp. 11, 13.

† Reuchlin, *Gesch. Italiens*, i. 56. A sentence of a proclamation of Nugent, another Austrian general, which was addressed to "Regno d'Italia Indipendente," ran thus: "Avete tutti a diventar una Nazione indipendente." (Gualterio, *Gli Ultimi Rivolgimenti Italiani*, ii. 3.) Bentinck, who commanded the English and Sicilian forces which passed from Leghorn to Genoa, was, of course, not sparing in appeals to freedom.

and causing some disturbance in Romagna, and the other was uttered only to be forgotten for thirty-two years, betrayed the commencement of a new epoch in Italian history which no decisions of the Powers could arrest.

Nevertheless, the restored governments insisted on presuming otherwise. Tuscany was the only place of importance where the reaction did not bring great misfortunes; and this was chiefly because the Grand-duke Leopold had been there before the French, and had left few abuses to be attacked or restored, though what changes Ferdinand did make were conducted with all the judgment characteristic of his father. But in Rome, while the wise Consalvi watched the interests of the Papacy at Vienna, the returned ecclesiastics wreaked vengeance on all French innovations under the leadership of Rivarola and Pacca. The whole antiquated system of justice, police, and trade, was revived; the Inquisition and the Jesuits were again called into existence; the very lighting of the streets was discontinued; all political writings were placed under ban, and hundreds of impeachments for heresy were instituted; the sales of Church property were declared void without compensation, and eighteen hundred monasteries and six hundred nunneries, which Napoleon had abolished, were re-established.\* In the Legations a like policy was pursued. The benevolence of Piedmont's king did not save this State from an equally violent reaction. Victor Emmanuel was weak and bigoted,

\* Brosch; *Gesch. des Kirchenstaates*, ii. 281. Farini; *Lo Stato Romano*, i., ch. 1.



and his country was at once the most loyal, and the most feudally disposed of all the Italian principalities. On his return from Sardinia, he fell into the hands of the nobles who had sulked away their time during the late domination. All that had happened since 1798 was cancelled; the chaotic laws of 1770 were proclaimed, and all judicial decisions made during the sixteen years of French administration were declared inoperative; all offices were commanded to be filled up according to the State calendar of 1798; Napoleon's bridge over the Po narrowly escaped destruction, even the plants placed by the French in the botanical gardens were uprooted; only Napoleon's officers could not at first be dispensed with. Modena experienced much the same treatment as Piedmont. Napoleon's consort, however, remained true to the French order in Parma, and won the regard of her subjects. And in Naples the reaction was much less extreme than in Rome and Piedmont by reason of the death of the Queen and the careless character of the King. Ferdinand, nevertheless, bound himself, in defiance of his promises under misfortune, to carry out the Austrian policy of intolerance to all constitutional measures; he styled himself the ruler of the united realm of the two Sicilies in order to ignore the independent Sicilian constitution which had given him and his wife so much trouble during their sojourn on the island; and he behaved with suspicion and dislike towards all who had served the usurpers. And Austria, while it approved and instigated this reactionary violence, and countenanced only by treacherous proclamations the

aspirations of its Lombardo-Venetian subjects, buried the feelings of good fellowship, which formerly subsisted between the Hapsburgs and their Italian provinces, in a hateful system of espionage and denationalisation.

The apprehensions of Austria were not unfounded. The Italian restoration was in truth reared on a volcanic soil. From this time the fabric of Italian society was tunnelled in all directions by secret societies. The chief of the *sette* was that of the Carbonari. Its origin is involved in much obscurity, but the most probable account traces its existence to the disturbances in Naples at the opening of the century. It is said that certain Neapolitan republicans were driven by the returned government to seek refuge in the wilds of Abruzzo and Calabria,\* and that there they formed a brotherhood, naming it after the chief occupation in those parts, the manufacture of charcoal, and styling their meetings *vendite* or charcoal sales. The object of the society seems to have changed with circumstances. When the French occupied the throne of Naples, the Carbonari, relying on the promises of the exiled king to grant a constitution on his return, appear to have forgotten their republicanism, and, coquetting with Murat when he bid for their support, to have plotted in behalf of Ferdinand. It is not unlikely

\* This is Botta's account, but both he and Colletta date the settled political purpose of the society from the time when the English suggested constitutional ideas by their action in Sicily, and by their connivance in the agitation of the Bourbons in Naples, which was really as brigand-like as the worst Carbonarism.

that if the restoration had been conducted in a judicious manner, little more would have been heard of the *sette*; but the aggravating circumstances attending that event, and the disbandment of thousands of officers, at once inflamed their revolutionary temper and greatly promoted their wide extension. According to the later organisation of the Carbonari, each member was supposed to provide himself with arms, and to contribute one lira a month to the common fund. With one hand on a sword and the other on a crucifix, he had to swear eternal hatred and ceaseless warfare against tyrants, and strife to the death for liberty and equality. Baptized with a red liquid, symbolical of the blood of tyrants, drinking at the grade of grand master from a skull, the type of decapitated despotism, he was plied with extreme democratic doctrines; and Ausonia, a republic of twenty-five provinces, comprehending the whole peninsula, Tyrol, the ancient States of Venice up to the Bocca di Cattaro, and all the islands of the Mediterranean within one hundred miles, was the political ideal for which he was bidden to live and die.\* With the approbation of the Pontifical government, the counter-societies of the Sanfedisti and Concistoriali were formed to defend Catholicism and the Papacy; the reactionary and conservative party was represented by the Calderari; and many others, with principles similar to those of the Carbonari, might be mentioned, of which some are known only by name and others by their

\* Nisco, *Storia d'Italia*, i. 49. Gualterio (ii. 5, 6) gives the oath taken by the Grand Elettore, and the constitution of Ausonia.

crimes and connection with the robber bands which infested middle and southern Italy. Thanks to retrograde infatuation, conspiracy was to contend with despotism to hinder the attainment of the fair ideal which the Empire's discipline had vouchsafed to Italian patriotism.

While it was Napoleon's function to promote union among the members of Germany and Italy, in Spain his chief unwitting service was to split dull unity into active discord. When he assumed the right to change the sovereign dynasty, he proposed to give the country a new constitution; and for this purpose, immediately after the abdication of the Bourbon family, he convoked a body of Spanish notables. This assembly was of its kind most imperfect. Owing to the instantaneous insurrection of the people, elections to it were practicable only in districts already occupied by French troops; and the greater number of its members, therefore, were persons of degree who happened to be within reach. To such spurious representation of the Spanish people Napoleon tendered his king and constitution. From this fortuitous knot of Spaniards, gathered beyond the reach of the rebellion of their countrymen, and filled with favourable expectations by the well-spoken Joseph and the promised reforms of French rule, he secured a fictitious assent to both proposals. But by the nation itself his scheme was viewed with abhorrence. To its pride a foreign yoke was intolerable; to its bigotry ameliorations at the hands of the irreligious French were maddening scourges. Though eventually

the good sense of Joseph Bonaparte sometimes succeeded in moderating repugnance to his rule, the nation, as a whole, could in no measure be conciliated by wholesome reform or improved administration. Moreover, circumstances led the Spaniards themselves to make a confident attempt to regenerate their country. The same prospects, which commended Joseph and his constitution to the assembly at Bayonne, invited the more enlightened patriots to seek redress from a national tribunal. The need for reform, however, even when urged by their own countrymen, did not touch the mass of the nation. The Spanish people cared only for the expulsion of the French: they were equally indifferent to improvement, whether offered by the invader or their own publicists; and the revolutionary movement, consequent on the treaty of Bayonne, was as provocative of civil conflict as Napoleon's aggression was of national insurrection.

The Central Junta was an irregular body with no claim to authority except its ability to meet the emergencies of the situation.\* As its incapacity became more apparent and more disastrous to the heroism of the nation, it incurred the contempt of the populace, and jealous opposition from the old legitimate powers of the realm, and the improvised provincial governments. Unwilling to relinquish power, it endeavoured in 1809 to prolong its existence by promising to convoke by the following year the Cortes, or National Parliament, the revival

\* Cf. *supra*, p. 191. On the following events see Baumgarten, *Geschichte Spaniens vom Ausbruch der französischen Revolution*, vols. i. and ii.

of which, on the return of Ferdinand, had already been set forth as the pledge of a better future. But while postponing as long as possible measures necessary for the election of the Cortes, it was driven by the advance of the French from Seville into Cadiz; and here, amid the execrations of Conservatives, Liberals, and mobs, it was compelled to abdicate in favour of a Regency of five persons. The subversion of the Central Junta was a victory for the Conservatives. As yet the nascent Liberalism, which naturally appeared on the collapse of the monarchy, had no status. For the moment the old Spain recovered respect, and popular government fell into discredit. When the expiring Junta strove to bind its successor to execute its promise to convoke the Cortes, the Regency answered that its paramount aim was to expel the enemy from the country, and to restore Ferdinand's • rightful sovereignty, which would be best attained by rigid observance of existing laws and customs.

Agreeable as this method was to the popular mind, pressing circumstances rendered the Conservative position untenable. It chanced that the seat of government was Cadiz, which of all Spanish towns enjoyed, by reason of its commercial intercourse, greatest immunity from bigotry and prejudice. This city shared, in truth, the revolutionary tendencies which existed in Portugal at this time, though temporarily repressed by the efforts of war and the presence of the English. Here now congregated all the candidates for political power; here assembled thousands of fugitives from the mainland laden with questions which the Junta's

announcement of the Cortes had raised. Long before the invasion, as long back, indeed, as the first half of the eighteenth century, when Father Feyjoó soberly introduced Spaniards to the scientific knowledge of Europe,\* a movement in behalf of intellectual culture had been initiated; and in the late reign a few enlightened men had encountered the enormities of the government by temperate demands. But the perversity of the people and the tyranny of the Prince of the Peace had crushed their occasional remonstrances. In the Central Junta this party had found representation, and its views had been upheld judiciously by Jovellanos, the wisest and most trusted of the Liberal band. But the ascendancy which the talents and virtues of this leader might have given him over the assembly, had been greatly diminished by physical ailments contracted during a cruel imprisonment in the previous reign. On the other hand, the remembrance of persecution, indignation at the official corruption and incapacity, which in these days of trial everywhere stultified the patriotism of the people, excited among the Liberals feelings which demanded firmer control than the enfeebled Jovellanos could exert. The Regency aggravated this spirit, and extended it among the people of the city, by cutting short the preparations for assembling the Cortes which had already been undertaken.

Before it had been overpowered by the machinations of the Conservatives, the Central Junta had issued writs of election to the Cortes in accordance

\* See Ticknor's *Hist. of Spanish Literature*, iii. 270.

with a plan for an upper and a lower house, which Jovellanos had recommended as a compromise between demands for a single chamber and the Conservative motion for separate assemblies of the nobles, clergy, and commons. Further, at the command of the Junta various special commissions had been engaged since the summer in preparing suggestions of reform, elucidating constitutional principles, and determining the true position of the coming Cortes. Shortly afterwards, the French appeared before Cadiz. The Regency, confined with its antagonists within the narrow limits of the town, was shaken by the immediate recoil of every mistake it perpetrated. Its authority grew daily more precarious, the cry for the Cortes more imperious. At this juncture Ferdinand overwhelmed his supporters with confusion. He was in custody at Valençay; and from there, being still convinced that his fortune depended on Napoleon's favour, he begged to be adopted by the Emperor, and granted the hand of an Imperial princess. The French took care to publish as widely as possible this correspondence, but without effect on the people, who regarded it as pure invention. The government in Cadiz, however, knowing too well the contemptible nature of Ferdinand, were thrown into a panic by the report. The hideous danger of Napoleon successfully establishing his influence in Spain, by entrapping its cowardly king into a marriage alliance, seemed so near, that the boldest encroachments on the rights of the sovereign appeared preferable to incurring its risk. The Regency decided upon abandoning its perilous re-



sponsibility; and on June 18th ordered the immediate assembly of the Cortes. But it was for revolution and not for reform that it now made way. Blind opposition had given influence to men of extreme views; neglect of prudent precautions gave free scope to extravagance; Jovellanos sorrowfully returned home to die; and the demand for a single chamber was conceded with little suspicion of its significance. This one chamber, moreover, was principally elected from the tumultuous throng within Cadiz itself, for the postponement of the summons of the Cortes made it necessary for many provinces, which were prevented from holding elections by the presence of the French, to be represented by members chosen by those of their inhabitants who had fled within the walls of the town.

With solemn ceremonial, amid the thunder of Spanish salvoes and the French bombardment, the Cortes met on September 24th. Supported by hopeful anticipations of the people, who had come to conceive an indistinct idea that their misfortunes were due to the degradation of the Cortes in the last three hundred years, uncontrolled by any traditional rules or authoritative instructions, the national parliament undertook with small misgiving the task of saving Spain from immediate bondage and future misgovernment. In zeal and industry, in unsuspected talent, in 'naïve inexperience, in distrust of Bourbon rule, in attachment to abstract principles, the new Cortes resembled the National Assembly of France without profiting by its example.' Having declared the sovereignty of the people as represented in itself, having

recognised Ferdinand as the only legitimate king, and pronounced the Treaty of Bayonne null and void because made under compulsion and without the consent of the people, it decreed its members to be incapable of accepting any office, wage, pension, or dignity, from the State. These decisions were agreed upon unanimously, for recent events had smitten both Liberals and Conservatives with dread of an absolute monarchy and horror of official corruption. The debate on the freedom of the press revealed the different principles underlying these motives. While the Liberals, careful not to excite the enmity of the clergy, demanded freedom for political discussion only, their opponents, without denying that the evils caused by Godoy might have been obviated if the people had been informed of the real state of affairs by a competent press, maintained that undisciplined writing was incompatible with true religion, and that a literature controlled by a judicious censure had a more stable position than one which could not be corrected till it had committed offences worthy of punishment. The motion of the Liberals was carried by a large majority; and, though analysis of the voting list showed that if genuine deputies and no substitutes had voted the result would have been different, the talent and knowledge of the party shone forth in the debate in such brilliant contrast to the stupidity and bigotry of its antagonist, that the success was attended by a corresponding advantage, which was speedily increased by the use which the Liberals made of freedom to print what they chose. Henceforth

agitation for reform grew bold and threatening; and the Conservative party was out-voted and out-argued whenever its fears did not make it an abettor in democratic innovations.

But a basis of compromise could not long endure between the two parties. The dispute over the emancipation of the peasantry proved that their conflict was to become implacable. Although serfage had never struck deep root in Spain, more than two-thirds of the land was tributary to the nobles and clergy, and the position of its labouring population was one of injurious dependence. The burdens of this dependence varied much, but they were always oppressive, and made the most fertile districts poverty-stricken when compared with less favoured regions held directly from the crown. Much of the land in feudal tenure had been granted by the sovereigns in contravention of laws and promises. Now, therefore, it was said, when the nation is in desperate economical straits; when war has thrown into abeyance all privileges, and the incapacity of the privileged classes has brought the nation into jeopardy; when the people are making boundless sacrifices to free the country from the invader;—now is the time for the abolition of feudal abuses as a surety for the future, and a reward to the people for their exertions. This proposal was carried exultingly by the Liberals against the stubborn opposition of the nobles, who now became determinedly hostile to the Cortes. In the debates on a constitution for Spain, dissension grew keener and more general. The clergy, now really alarmed, strenuously defended the

divine right of King Ferdinand against the sovereignty of the people, which the majority insisted on taking as the basis of their work. But all opposition was overridden by the Liberals; and in the end the Cortes put forth the famous constitution of 1812, which, as Wellington said,\* it had constructed very much on the principle that an artist paints a picture, viz., to be looked at. In this fabrication the two prevailing ideas of the Spanish reformers again appeared. In order to render the royal power harmless, the monarch was surrounded by checks and limitations; in order to prevent it from corrupting members, the prohibition against ministers sitting in the house was repeated, and a general election every two years was ordained with the provision that old members were disqualified from serving again. To replace the debased monarchy, a phantom crown, a totally inexperienced parliament, and a secluded executive, were devised.

Assuring as seemed this advantage within the walls of Cadiz, the Cortes was far from possessing a sound basis of authority over the country. It had failed to arrest disaster or assuage woe, and novelty no longer gave it the support of hope. In the town its policy and misfortunes had created many enemies; and the strength of the Conservatives began to appear in the conduct of the government. When the advance of Wellington opened the way for it to make a reality of its paper constitution, the nation was found to be in no mood to welcome political experiments. Compared with the late troubles, the last reign seemed pleasant

\* Wellington to Earl Bathurst, January 27th, 1813.

enough. The Cortes, however, proceeding as if the constitution made its power irrefragable, attacked the monasteries—next to official corruption the worst feature of the old Spain—and declared the Inquisition incompatible with the new institutions. In any other country the invasions on ecclesiastical property would have been amply justified by economical distress; and the powers reserved to the clergy would have satisfied the most jealous religionists. But not so in Spain. The Cortes was soon at open war with the clergy, and with banishment began to combat denunciation. By the folly of their opponents and their own ability, the Liberals got the upper hand in the new Cortes, which was duly elected in 1813. Their influence was temporarily increased by a return of the dread lest Ferdinand should surrender the country to the enemy. After the battle of Leipzig, Napoleon proposed to the captive of Valensay an alliance by which, in consideration of his throne, Ferdinand should promise friendship to France, the evacuation of Spain by the English, and an amnesty to those who had served Joseph. Ferdinand, who appears to have been ignorant of what had been occurring in Spain and Europe, accepted, after some hesitation, the proposed alliance with the intention of repudiating it as soon as safety permitted; and he sent emissaries to Madrid to procure its ratification. Intelligence of this negotiation revived the suspicions of the Conservatives, and enabled the Liberals to add restraints on the freedom of the King. To ensure his submission to the constitution, his route to Madrid was prescribed,

and his movements were ordered to be controlled till he had taken the appointed oath.

Ultimately, Ferdinand was released by Napoleon without conditions ; and he announced his immediate return by a letter which the Cortes interpreted as an approval of its actions. But while the Cortes had arranged that Ferdinand should proceed by Reus to Valencia, he turned aside at the petition of Palafox to visit Saragossa. Joyous as his reception had been to this point, the King here experienced for the first time the full force of that enthusiastic loyalty with which the Spanish people were still filled. Those who surrounded him, and wished to restore the old Spain, now conceived the design of annulling the constitution. At Daroca, such a course was openly proposed to him. The irresolute Ferdinand hesitated to take such a step ; but his reception at Valencia increased his confidence to such a degree that he ventured to show, by his behaviour to a deputation from the Cortes, unmistakable repugnance to the new order. Hereupon the Conservatives renewed their exertions, and the power of the Liberals rapidly declined. In Madrid, now the seat of the Cortes, the Liberal party was overwhelmed with popular execration ; and in the rest of the towns the constitution was denounced as the work of traitors and heathens. From the legislative assembly itself the opposition, while professing fidelity to the constitution and permitting the passage of indiscreet measures, sent to the King a memorial stigmatising with all the distortion of falsehood the deeds of the Cortes as factious treason. Still Ferdinand hesitated to take

the decisive steps which his advisers recommended. But at last his craven nature gathered courage for a *coup d'état*. On the night of May 10th, some thirty of the foremost Liberals in Madrid were thrown into prison, and the Cortes was ordered to be closed. At the same time a manifesto promised a mild, just, and liberal government, but annulled the work of the Cortes, and threatened with death all who attempted to support it. The mob quickly took the hint; and the royal outrage was speedily sanctioned by popular excesses.

But though the people conspired with their prince to effect a restoration, it was no more possible for Spain than it was for Germany, or Italy, to bring back the old order. Of all European countries it could least plead exemption from reform. Having been touched by the leaven of the Revolution, neither passionate loyalty, nor arrogant prejudice, could arrest the process of social ferment. Spain might defer, but it could not escape, revolution; and its refusal to accept the ordeal during the age of wars entailed a bitter experience of civic strife and foreign intervention in the era of peace.

## CHAPTER VII.

### RUSSIA, SCANDINAVIA, AND THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE.

“ Hereditary bondsmen ! Know ye not  
Who would be free themselves must strike the blow ?  
By their right arms the conquest must be wrought ?  
Will Gaul or Muscovite redress ye ? No !  
True, they may lay your proud despoilers low,  
But not for you will freedom's altars flame.”

*Lord Byron.*

FROM more than one point of view the reign of Alexander I. was an important period in the history of Russia.\* The wars and policy of Napoleon enabled him to play in the affairs of the Western world a far more imposing part than the most sanguine of his predecessors had contemplated ; peace left him with a large share of his enemy's dictatorial power ; and the Restoration brought his territories into closest connection with Central Europe. These consequences were in a large measure due to external circumstances, to the situation, extent, and climate of the country, to the character of its inhabitants, and the necessities of neighbouring States. But it was through Alexander's personal nature that the civilising tendencies of this fruitful age penetrated into the land. Naturally susceptible to the calls of humanity, he had been

\* The best work on Russia at this period is Bernhardt's *Geschichte Russlands*, II. 2.



educated according to the commands of his grandmother, Catherine II., by a number of preceptors, of whom the most influential was the liberal Laharpe, a pupil of Basedow, the pedagogic reformer. Agreeably to the tenor of Rousseau's doctrines, his imaginative disposition, which was averse to strenuous labour, had been disciplined by no course of rigorous application. Hence he came to the throne filled with generous desires to ameliorate the condition of his people. He came plighting his allegiance to the forgotten principles of Peter the Great ; he came averring that autocracy was only a means to promote the interests and improvement of the subject multitude, that no power in the world was legitimate which sprang not from the law. Hence, too, Alexander's proneness to rest content with imagining an end achieved rather than to exert himself over the necessary means. Hence,\* again, his susceptibility to discordant advice, and consequent tendency to irresolution and inconsistency. His unhappy family experiences had added to these weaknesses a faculty for dissimulation which caused Napoleon to compare him with a Byzantine Greek. In his youth, moreover, want of information and experience prevented him from possessing any conception of the difficulties lying between him and his objects. Consequently, his attempted reforms, mainly falling as they did within his less mature years, resulted almost uniformly in failure ; and his memory is as equally chequered by the evil he caused as by the good he pursued. Nevertheless, his career imparted into Russian despotism a new element. In point of fact

he introduced into it the spirit of the philanthropical movement, and gave to his country as much of the Revolution as the dreary, backward land could receive.

Gradually ridding himself of the circle which had murdered his father, the young Tsar gathered about him the coterie of congenial youths with whom he had associated as a prince. With them he discussed the reform of his Empire according to the dictates of humanitarianism. From the first, the traditions of the last reign were broken with. The tools of Tsar-craft, with which Paul had scattered apprehension and dismay, were immediately discarded; and the victims of past arbitrary vengeance were released. Torture was abolished; the censure of the press was much relaxed, and the books of other nations were allowed to be imported; Russians were permitted to travel abroad, and foreigners were no longer forbidden the country; the regulations as to dress were dropped, taxation and conscription were reduced, while the expenditure of the court was diminished. The rights of nobles, clergy, and municipalities, which Paul had roughly invaded, were confirmed. The export of Russian produce was permitted according to Catherine's tariff. A true Council of the Empire was established in place of the earlier incompetent assembly.

Though taking little account of the economical aspect of serfage and agrarian restrictions, Alexander earnestly desired the liberation of the people and their lands from all oppressive conditions. In his eyes, such institutions were incompatible with happy and noble manhood; and he felt that their abolition

was indispensable for a regeneration of Russian society. One of his first acts, therefore, was to grant the merchant class the power of acquiring land without serfs, and to the peasants on the crown lands a similar privilege. He also prohibited alienation of the royal domains in order to protect the peasantry thereon from transference to private owners; for it was held, rightly or wrongly, that the denizens of crown lands were not really serfs; and, indeed, they seem on the whole to have led a far less oppressed and dependent existence than their brethren on the nobles' estates. A million roubles a year were also set aside for the purchase of land by the crown, and the conversion of the accompanying serfs into demesne peasants. In February, 1803, the advertisement of single serfs without land for sale in the newspapers was prohibited;\* and later, such sales themselves were interdicted. The example of the court naturally secured some imitation from nobles, who were either anxious for the welfare of the people or desirous of attracting favour. Thus voluntary contracts of liberation between owners and serfs came to be legalised, though unfortunately with little ulterior result. In pursuance of motions made by the provincial assemblies of Esthonia and Livonia, the relations of serfs to their masters in the East Sea governments were regulated and mitigated, while the sale of serfs without land was positively forbidden. Many abuses, too, were attacked, and some barbarous masters were deposed or sent to Siberia.† Finally,

\* Cf. Wallace, *Russia*, ch. vii.

† Cf. *Ibid*, ch. xxix.

between 1816 and 1818, the German nobility of Esthonia, Courland, and Livonia emancipated their serfs and gave them a civil status, though as no land accompanied liberation the lot of the peasantry was not materially improved by the change.

Next to attract Alexander's concern was education. Early in his reign an elaborate scheme of primary and higher instruction was drawn up and set in motion. Much attention was also paid to the development of trade and industry. An imperial ordinance threw open the first guild of the mercantile class to the nobles without prejudice to their privileges. The system of canals, which Peter the Great had planned, was diligently taken in hand. With especial care and success was the colonisation of the districts bordering the Black Sea encouraged. The small settlement of Odessa, which in 1803 could hardly afford a four-roomed house to its governor, was rapidly converted by exemptions, grants, public works, and the administration of the Duc de Richelieu, into a flourishing commercial town with numerous English, German, Greek, and Italian business houses. Taganrog grew up under similar conditions, though its inferior physical advantages did not permit equal success. The desert territory between the Dnieper and Bug, which had been won by the peace of Kutschuk-Kainardji, was brought under cultivation; and its resources were developed by colonists from Germany and Moldavia, who were attracted by free grants of land and capital. At the same time an attempt was made to improve the efficiency of the central administration by increasing the powers of the

Senate, and by superseding the colleges of Peter the Great with ministries of Western pattern. And a commission was appointed to bring order into the chaos of laws, which principally consisted of seventy thousand ukazes of equal authority issued by the Tsars since the time of Alexey Michailowitsch.

But at the end of his first reforming period, which extended to the peace of Tilsit, Alexander found that his intention to reconstitute Russian society was far from being realised. As he learned more exactly the state of the nation, he grew more desponding of success. His aspiration to be Emperor of a free people was foiled by dogged resistance from the nobles. Those innovations which he ventured to make were constantly thwarted by evasion and incapable administration. For example, the prohibition against selling serfs off their lands was regularly eluded by selling the appointed measure of land with the serfs, on the understanding that it was to be immediately conveyed back again without them; while the numerous body of bondmen unattached to land, such as personal attendants, who were frequently sold to escape the expense of their maintenance or to raise money, were altogether overlooked, and an auction mart for serfs continued to exist close to the imperial palace. Notwithstanding active co-operation on the part of some of the clergy and nobility, the educational project was wrecked by want of qualified teachers and the impenetrable stupidity of the popular mind. The endeavour to improve the administration miscarried on account of

imperfect demarcation of its different departments, want of able servants, and the Tsar's own autocratic foibles. Codification of the law was found to be so far beyond the capacity of Russian jurists that the charge of the work was given to a Livonian named Rosenkampff, who was equally ignorant of the Russian language and Russian law, and was not ashamed to equivocate when hesitation failed to hide his incompetence. Alexander's disappointments were further aggravated by the discontent of the old Russian party, which would have nothing to do with western civilisation; and of the ecclesiastical party, which was shocked by his tolerant conduct and disregard of religious forms. Under these circumstances mistrust soon caused him to withhold confidence from the incapable counsellors of his youth; the corruption and shamelessness of his officials led him to doubt the possibility of honest service. In bitter reality he compassed the dismal circle in which great questions move in Russia. In bitter truth he discovered that for a great political change, all classes of the people were neither intellectually, morally, nor politically prepared; and that such preparation can never be brought about without some great administrative revolution.\*

Thus, when Alexander allied himself with Napoleon, he was quite ready to dismiss his advisers, who were in favour of English models and an English alliance, and to seek for new help which should be at once more practical and more congruous with his changed foreign policy. Such help

\* Gervinus, *Geschichte des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, i. 714.

he found in Speranski, the Secretary of State, a man of great energy and mental power, who had acquired extensive practical experience while raising himself from a very humble station, and had formed his statesmanship by studying the French publicists. To this man Alexander transferred his entire confidence. With him alone he debated the reform of his Empire, and from him alone he sought means for carrying it out. It was Speranski's belief that the failure of the Tsar's earlier measures was due to want of a fundamental plan. He proposed proceeding from some well-considered scheme for the complete reformation of the State. The contents of his original project are unknown, but it is apparent from the introductory measures that they did not err from want of thoroughness. Speranski struck at the root of bureaucratic incapacity and corruption, by basing promotion on merit instead of on seniority and favour; nay, he even ventured to institute an examination test, in hope of raising the standard of national education at the same time that the minds of the officials were purified and developed. But he thus early stumbled over the pitfalls of the defective Russian culture, for the encyclopædic course of study which he prescribed was entirely beyond the grasp of the students, and, indeed, its rudiments hardly existed anywhere in the country. He next strove to erect a supreme body to which all branches of administration should converge, since the ministries had been provided with no interconnecting bond except common responsibility to the Emperor; and the Council of the Empire was so reconstituted that it became

what Peter the Great had intended the Senate to be. In a somewhat altered form this institution still exists ; but since it was not given to Speranski to accomplish the remainder of his designs, the efficiency of the Council fell far short of what he contemplated.

A strong motive for the immediate introduction of this measure was the financial distress of the government. Speranski, who was not unacquainted with the doctrines of Adam Smith, and was helped by two others holding similar views, was convinced that only straightforward economy and taxation could redeem the calamitously depreciated paper currency, and that free trade alone could improve the resources of the people. To reconcile the nation to increased burdens, by showing that they were imposed in no arbitrary spirit, was one of the purposes for which he designed the Council. In this assembly he brought forward his financial scheme, which recognised the paper money as a State debt, and forbade its increase ; while its redemption was provided for by further fiscal imposts. Though no trained financier, Speranski might have succeeded by force of his natural abilities in placing the Russian exchequer on a firm basis if he had continued in power for a few years : it is very doubtful, however, whether his want of juristic training would ever have allowed him to give a thoroughly serviceable code of laws to the Russian people. Yet he rigorously applied himself to this task. Rosenkamppff's commission was broken up into sections, and Speranski set to work to evolve from the results of their labours a



law-book founded on general principles. Like every clever layman of liberal tendencies in those days, he was full of admiration for the Code Napoleon; and he naturally sought advice by corresponding with French lawyers. Consequently, when the first part of his work was laid before the government, it was found to be very remotely related to Russian authoritative sources, and to possess a strong resemblance to the French code. That Russia was not sufficiently advanced for such a scheme of legislation can hardly be doubted, yet even an unsuitable code seemed preferable to the chaotic jurisprudence which opened the way to boundless bribery of judges, and actually allowed an impudent pleader to stultify a supreme court by citing imaginary ukazes. But these considerations obtained little weight at the time. It sufficed to accuse the author of an intention to palm off on the Russian people a bad translation of Napoleon's law-book.

From the first the alliance with France had been disliked by the country. The wars against the French in behalf of strangers had been unpopular, but more so was their inglorious termination; and this dissatisfaction increased as the true nature of the connection with Napoleon became more apparent. Moreover, the taste for French culture, imparted to the upper classes in Catherine's reign, had given place to solicitude for the integrity of the Russian national character. The Revolution had sent thousands of French exiles to Russia to seek a livelihood by teaching their language and accomplishments. At first welcomed as an opportune

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reinforcement to the staff of instructors, they soon incurred odium by their tendency to suppress the sense of nationality and independence in the Russian youth. The earlier satirical literature had been succeeded by imitations of the French sentimental writers, in excellent harmony with the tone of Alexander's early government; but now both were superseded by a patriotic reaction, which grew more violent as the breach between the Tsar and Napoleon widened.\* The circumstances of Speranski's rise to power had erroneously marked him as an adherent of France, and had excited against him the animosity of the patriotic party. His tribute to the French code, published at a time when war with France was imminent, strengthened the attacks of his enemies. Already his determination to reform the country, his utterances concerning an impending emancipation of the serfs, his indifference to high society, had made him an object of detestation to the aristocracy and old Russian party. Now patriotism leagued with conservatism and jealousy to discredit him in the eyes of the Tsar. For a short time Alexander's impressionable nature withstood these attacks; but gradually he lost faith in the man who had been his right hand, and on the occasion of a comparatively unimportant indiscretion he yielded to the cries of treason, and hardly forbore from depriving his minister of life as well as office. In March, 1812, Speranski was suddenly banished from St. Petersburg, and his enemies celebrated what they called the first victory over the French.

\* Cf. Haller, *Gesch. der Russischen Literatur*, p. 62.

After the War of Liberation Alexander returned home filled with new views and prepossessions. To the ambition which had made him the abettor and conqueror of Napoleon, he had added indulgence in religious mysticism. When still in Russia, immediately after the destruction of Moscow, he had been directed by a companion of his youth to seek strength and comfort in the Bible. He had surprised his mother by asking her for a copy of the Book; and his last act before leaving St. Petersburg for the front was to issue an ukaze establishing the Russian Bible Society. Later, during his sojourn in Western Europe, he came under the influence of Christian charlatans and dreamers. When he reached home he was more a champion of the Holy Alliance than a servant to the cause of humanity.

Like his predecessors who had contributed to the civilisation of Russia, Alexander considerably extended the limits of the Empire; and he thus became instrumental in effecting the settlement of Scandinavia, which has endured to this day. It has already been indicated how he seized Finland in 1809,\* how St. Petersburg was finally freed from the menaces of Swedish strategy, and the Russian position on the Baltic was greatly improved. By the peace of Friderikshamm, Sweden ceded its territory up to the river Tornea together with the islands of Åland. The sturdy resistance of the Finns caused Alexander to confirm the liberal constitution which Gustavus III. had given them; and by this concession, if not by less

\* See above, p. 183.

creditable means, the new province was securely attached to the Russian crown. Sweden's indemnity for this loss was more directly due to the vicissitudes of the revolutionary wars. Since Carl XIII. had no children, and the Danish prince who was elected to be his successor died suddenly under suspicious circumstances, the Swedes made Bernadotte, Prince of Ponte Corvo, heir to the throne. This marshal of Napoleon was a Gascon by birth, who had already abandoned the life of a lawyer for a military career when the Revolution opened to his soldierly and administrative abilities a rapid advance to offices of distinction. During his administration of Hanover and the Hanse towns, he had gained much popularity; and by his treatment of the Swedish army on its retreat out of Lauenberg in the war with Prussia, he had won the regard of many Swedish officers. His appointment to be Sweden's future king was so far from being a work of Napoleon,\* that, though he obtained a formally cordial permission to accept it, both parties felt the change to involve a total reversal of their relationship. Bernadotte renounced his French citizenship and embraced the Lutheran creed; he was adopted by Carl XIII. as a son; while he relieved the infirm king of the arduous business of government, and did all in his power to shield his new country from the tyranny of his former master. Napoleon, on the other hand, commenced a relentless persecution of

\* A belief that Napoleon somehow forced Bernadotte on the Swedes as he forced Murat on the Neapolitans is still to be found among English writers on modern history.

Sweden from the time of his instalment in power. Still Bernadotte was a typical product of the Revolution, and Sweden obtained an appropriate result from his services. From its own domestic revolution it had secured constitutional changes, which formed a wholesome modification of the monarchical innovations of Gustavus III. From its French ruler it received the much coveted possession of Norway. Bernadotte demanded this as the price of his assistance to Russia against France,\* notwithstanding the fact that peace with Denmark had been concluded long ago at Jönköping. The arbitrary nature of the bargain did not prevent it from being ratified at Vienna.

The sole offence which could be pleaded to justify this unprincipled dismemberment was Denmark's alliance with Napoleon. The fault, or rather misfortune, was common to most European countries at that time, and Denmark deserved retribution less than any other continental State. Under its Regent,† who became Frederick VI. in 1808, and his minister Bernstorff, it had striven to preserve a dignified neutrality throughout the revolutionary wars, and had made no small advance in civilisation. Serfage, which the monarchy had quite failed to reduce, had been abolished; the slave trade had been prohibited earlier than in any other States; education had been actively encouraged, and trade promoted. But the country had been twice attacked by England, once for expostulating against

\* See above, p. 203.

† Christian VII. became totally imbecile in 1784.

British maritime policy, once on suspicion that its fleet would fall a prey to Napoleon, and it had thus been finally compelled to range itself on the side of France. It had also been obliged to maintain this alliance to the last in order to support its claim on Norway. But in the campaign of 1813, Bernadotte, who was anxious to do the French as little damage as possible in view of the contingency of his being called upon to be Napoleon's successor, brought the Danes to a separate peace, and compelled them by the treaty of Kiel to cede Norway to Sweden in exchange for Swedish Pomerania and the Isle of Rügen.\* In the following November Denmark purchased peace with England by the cession of Heligoland. Further, Prussia completed its misfortunes by taking Swedish Pomerania and Rügen at the arbitrary valuation of Lauenberg and two million thalers, on the ground that it had fomented an insurrection in Norway against Swedish rule. This insurrection, however, though soon quelled, produced one of the most satisfactory results of the epoch. The Norwegians, more akin in language and habits to the Danes, cherished a keen dislike of their neighbours over the mountains. When they heard of their transference to Sweden, they declared themselves inde-

\* This period is notable for another successful effort of the Swedes to disengage their peninsula from the influence of the Danes. By the completion of the Tröllhøta canal, which opened up navigation between Gottenburg and Lake Wenar, a system of internal navigation between the Baltic and the Kattegat was made possible, and the Swedes were rendered independent of Denmark's command of the Sound and other natural channels out of the Baltic.

pendent, formed an almost republican constitution, and elected a Danish prince to be their king. But Bernadotte entered their country before any adequate defence could be prepared, and they were compelled to bow to the new arrangement. Nevertheless, they succeeded in preserving their independent government, constitution, and laws; and their connection with Sweden, though declared to be indissoluble, resulted in nothing more irksome than allegiance to a common sovereign.

Towards Turkey Alexander pursued the traditional policy of his house with as much vigour as Western affairs would permit. Georgia had just been acquired when he came to the throne, and then the Caspian coast from the mouth of the Terek to the mouth of the Kar was annexed. But no war of conquest broke out till 1806, for Sultan Selim was ready to make many concessions rather than to interrupt his plans for internal reform by disturbing the peace of Jassy. After the peace of Amiens, Napoleon and Alexander competed for influence at the Turkish court; and, though the Sultan long refused to recognise the usurpation of the French Emperor, the success of his arms and the extension of his Empire to the Turkish frontier eventually gave General Sebastiani complete ascendancy over the Porte. It was Sebastiani's mission to embarrass Russia by involving it in war with Turkey. In consequence of appeals from insurgent Servians Russia had already outraged the feelings of the Sultan by demanding a treaty of alliance, and the protectorate of all Turkish subjects belonging to the Greek Church. The

offer of French friendship and assistance, the withdrawal of Russian troops from the South to fight against Napoleon, persuaded Selim to precipitate at once the war which Alexander was evidently determined to wage sooner or later. Sebastiani's counsel was followed by deposing the Greek Hospodars of Wallachia and Moldavia, who were known to lean towards Russia, in contravention of a pledge given in 1802 not to remove them without previous notice to the Russian Government.\* Alexander, preferring not to proclaim war, sent forthwith an army into Moldavia; and it devolved on the Sultan to make the declaration. Hostilities were interrupted by Alexander's engagement at Tilsit not to annex Wallachia and Moldavia, till a further agreement at Erfurt assigned to Russia the principalities on the ground that France was loosed from its obligations to Turkey by the dethronement of Selim. After a few successes and many reverses, the Porte obtained in 1812 peace at the price of Bessarabia and part of Moldavia. Impending war with France induced Russia to be content with the boundary of the Pruth; and the road to Constantinople was left still too long and difficult for the comfort of Muscovite statesmen.

This respite belied the expectations which on-lookers in the eighteenth century had formed of the fate of the Ottoman Empire. Since the Peace of Carlowitz in 1699, the Turks had been obliged to abandon that demeanour of scornful superiority

\* By the treaty of Peace of Kainardji the Porte had granted Russia permission to remonstrate in favour of these two principalities.



which ignorance, religious arrogance, and military success had caused them to assume towards the Giaours. From that time the imperial system, which the Sultans had founded on the word of the Koran, on contempt for infidels, and on prowess in war, was in full decline. How rapid was the subsequent decay of the Ottoman power in Europe, the Peace of Kainardji showed in 1774, when the Turks made to Russia concessions directly subversive of the integrity of their Empire. At that time the final triumph of the cross over the crescent was regarded as merely a question of convenience to Austria and Russia,—a question which Joseph II. and Catherine II. together came very near settling. Nor when the accession of the wary Leopold to Joseph's troubled throne rid Turkey of one of its traditional enemies, was the ability of Russia alone to restore Christian worship in St. Sophia doubted by those who were cognisant of the state of Ottoman resources. The will, too, to undertake the enterprise single-handed was not wanting to Catherine; and it is notorious that the pacification of Jassy was only an armistice to enable the Empress to gather the ripe rewards of perfidy nearer home. But the death of Catherine saved the Porte from a renewal of her attack, and deferred another collision with Russian ambition till Alexander levelled his parenthetical blows.

Though the impotence of the Turkish armies appeared to be the chief cause of the threatened collapse of the Ottoman Empire, it was in itself only one consequence of a more general and fatal weakness. Founded upon conquest and organised

after feudal fashion, the heritage of the Sultans retained its pristine power only so long as its rulers were extraordinarily able and vigorous men. But no really great potentate was produced by the House of Othman after Suleiman the Magnificent. From that time, in spite of occasional wise ministers and energetic Sultans, the government of the Porte degenerated, till it became a *régime* of feebleness, corruption, and imbecility, such as only an Oriental despotism can keep in existence. At the end of last century it had reached the lowest depths of abasement. The central administration was ignorant and vicious beyond belief; and the provincial governors, though nominally servants of the Sultan, were in most cases rulers who rendered slight allegiance to their lord, and often withstood his mandates to the extremity of civil war. Long ago the Janissaries had been compelled by depreciation of the currency to keep shops and follow trades in order to maintain a family in the capital. This change, combined with the introduction of hereditary service, had destroyed their fighting qualities without improving their civic virtues.\* Once the tribute and terror of Christendom, these famous warriors of the crescent had become a privileged order of insolent Turkish militia, whose incapacity in the field was only equalled by pertinacity in preying upon the resources of the State and the earnings of the peasant. Fear of their insurrection fettered every Sultan, for never yet had the government been able to oppose their determined demands; while the

\* Finlay, *Greece under Ottoman and Venetian Domination*, p. 44.

jealousy thus engendered made them suspicious of every innovation lest it should be directed towards their overthrow. Their intolerance of every advance, except in the amount of largesses to themselves, was supported by the fanatical bigotry of the Moslem mob. It effectually prevented the Ottoman despots from discharging those functions of order and civilisation which are the part of monarchs when feudal discipline has ceased to render tolerable the institutions of mediæval barbarism. Nor was there another class from which redress might be sought. The Turks came into Europe as a militant minority, and they never assimilated themselves to the vanquished disunited majority. As conquerors and despoilers they came; as lords and taxgatherers they remained. Themselves not inclined to industry, their presence hindered its development among the Christian population, and robbed of political significance all that struggled into existence. Hence there was no burgher class to help the monarchy to assert its functions, no commons to aid the crown against disobedient and tyrannical vassals.

The nature of these evils and the history of other nations suggested a remedy to be immediately applied if the patrimony of the House of Othman was to be preserved from hostile dismemberment or spontaneous disintegration. In most European states there had recently been shown what the advent of strong and enlightened monarchs could effect for national disorders; and in nearly every case it had been proved that a disciplined standing army was the indispensable instrument which such monarchs

needed. Now, although the position of Turkish sovereigns was very weak, and not the rudiments of an efficient military force existed, it was conceivable that a Sultan of strong character might find an opportunity to fortify himself against the rabble of Stamboul, and train an army capable of subduing rebellious Pashas and discontented Janissaries. It was, therefore, a coincidence of no little moment that when Turkey was granted an intermission of foreign attack a prince of no common calibre was reigning at Constantinople. Selim III. mounted the Turkish throne with a determination to root out abuse, and introduce Western reforms. His youth had been passed in freedom very unlike the luxurious incarceration in which the heirs of Othman were then usually reared; and he had applied himself to study the evils which beset the Turkish Empire and to seek their cure in the experience of more advanced nations.\* When the dangers of immediate war ceased he commenced to form a methodical plan for the reconstruction of the administration, and the development of intelligence among all classes of his subjects. But he made all his efforts subsidiary to the creation of an efficient standing army. He found the Ottoman forces without uniformity of weapons or movements, with no condition of success except the desperate valour of the individual Turk. Perceiving the great superiority conferred by discipline and drill, he resolved to form a military force after the European pattern. A small body of disciplined soldiers was actually serviceable before Bonaparte

\* Cf. Creasy, *Hist. of the Ottoman Turks*, p. 433.

invaded Egypt. This step was achieved by means of French help ; and after the renewal of peace the hollow friendship of Napoleon continued to place at his disposal facilities for teaching his subjects to fight in Western fashion.

But Selim's measures against the insurgent Janissaries of Servia had provoked much discontent among the order and among his Mohammedan subjects. When he proceeded to ordain that picked men from the irregular troops should be trained into regular soldiers, the Janissaries murdered his agents, and attacked the new force. Finally those of Constantinople in league with the Mufti, Ulema, and Kaimakan, deposed him from his throne and placed thereon Mustapha, the eldest son of Abdul Hamid. Bairactar, the loyal Pasha of Rustchuk, attempted to restore Selim, but before he was able to force an entrance into the Seraglio the unfortunate ex-Sultan had died by order of Mustapha. Mahmoud, Mustapha's brother and sole remaining Ottoman prince, after narrowly escaping a similar fate, was immediately raised to the throne by Bairactar, who assumed the office of Grand Vizier. But this government also fell in the endeavour to carry through Selim's abortive project ; and the youthful Mahmoud was forced to acquiesce in the demand for a return to the old institutions. Without experience, powerless, and at war with Russia, the new Sultan was long compelled to observe his agreement with the impracticable mob. The Janissaries little suspected that in place of the mild Selim they had made Sultan one whose grim renown was to be that of destroyer of their tribe. The world, too, failed

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to understand that the worst days of the Ottoman Empire were drawing to a close. Yet in Selim's ill-fated efforts, in the inchoate plans which he communicated to his nephew when sharing his imprisonment, were the germs of a revival of the Ottoman despotism. Through them the Revolution, too distant to purge Europe of Mussulman domination, succeeded in imparting such small impulse to improvement as was sufficient to prolong the life of the Ottoman Empire: to them it is primarily due that the Turk still vexes South-eastern Europe, and that a time has come when the West shudders at the prospect of his withdrawal.

But while these events foreshadowed a continuance of Turkish rule in Europe, others were tending to curtail its extent. The revolts of the Porte's Christian subjects, which hitherto had aimed only at helping foreign invaders, now became struggles of the subject nations to help themselves.\* During this period a struggle for independence was actually carried on with no little success by the Servian people; and silent preparations for a greater revolt were being undertaken by the Greeks.

Among the Christian subjects of the Porte the Greeks occupied an unique position. In numbers inferior only to the Wallachian and Sclavonian races,† they possessed an ecclesiastical, official, and commercial status to which other Rayah populations could lay no claim. Over Orthodox nations they exercised of course religious ascendancy. And, together with its spiritual functions, the Greek

\* Freeman, *The Ottoman Power in Europe*, p. 165.

† Finlay, *Hist. of the Greek Revolution*, i. 3.

Church held in trust for the Turkish Government extensive official authority; for Mohammed, the Conqueror, had deftly turned to best account the administrative and judicial powers which Theodosius the Great had originally conferred on the Greek bishops. The moral influence of this authority was much weakened by consequent servile and simoniacal conduct of the higher members of the Greek Church; but the common confusion of what was Greek with what was Orthodox preserved its ascendancy.

In many districts the Greek laity took the place of a middle class; in some, notably in Wallachia and Moldavia, they were as supreme as the Turks were in Greece; in Constantinople they filled offices of responsibility in the government, and formed the wealthy quarter of the Phanar. But, though elevated in consideration of their own abilities, they did nothing to civilise the Ottoman government. Useful as they were to their masters, they brought no benefit to the people committed to their charge. As taxgatherers and deputy-governors of the Turk they were hated no less for falseness and rapacity than for the odious nature of their office. Nor did their advancement contribute much to the weal of their obscurer brethren. Instances did occur when an influential Greek used his power to ameliorate the condition of a portion of his race, or to help a fellow in misfortune; but the fame of the Phanariots was bad even among their own countrymen, and the Greek populace hardly concealed from themselves their condemnation of the hierarchy. Hence the advancement of individual Greeks did nothing to

promote the growth of national feeling and patriotism; while disparity of condition, and the intense egoism and exuberant unscrupulousness of the Greek character, conspired to perpetuate the disunion which protracted degradation had fostered.

Peter the Great sought to enlist the services of the Greeks in his schemes for getting command of the Bosphorus by trying to persuade them to look to Russia as the protector of the Orthodox church.\* Under the Empress Anne, Marshal Münnich recommended that the Greeks should be stirred up systematically against Ottoman domination. In the war between Catherine II. and the Sultan, which ended in 1774, Gregory Orloff practically essayed to kindle a Greek rebellion by appearing with a Russian fleet and a small body of troops. But this enterprise met with indifferent success on account of Catherine's deceptive promises of aid and the demand of the Orloffs for the allegiance of the Greeks to their mistress; and finally the insurgents were abandoned to the vengeance of the Turks. This episode considerably diminished the faith in Russian help which the Greeks had begun to entertain. Yet Catherine did not desist from seeking the assistance of the Greek subjects of the Porte. Under Potemkin's guidance she trained in Russian establishments a few Greek youths for the leadership of their countrymen in some future struggle for independence.† In the next war with Turkey

\* Cf. Gervinus, *Gesch. des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, v. 30; Mendelssohn Bartholdy, *Gesch. Griechenlands*, i. 63; Finlay, *Greece under Ottoman and Venetian Domination*, p. 301.

† Finlay, *Ibid.*, p. 326.



recourse was not had to the unwarlike Greeks of the Morea and Archipelago, and only Albanians and pirates were incited to revolt. Nevertheless, discreditable as were for the most part the results of these transactions, they served very materially to prepare the Greeks for an independent war of liberation. They disturbed the national lethargy, and proved to the discontented that they must rely on their own efforts for deliverance from bondage.

But stipulations, made by Russia to provide a pretext for interference in the affairs of Turkey, contributed to the material and commercial advancement of the Greek nation, and so subjected it to wider and more liberal influences. Commencing with the famous provision in the treaty of Kainardji, whereby the Tsar came to be regarded as the protector of the Orthodox in Turkey, Russia proceeded in 1779 and 1783 to obtain from the Sultan commercial treaties enabling the Orthodox to enjoy the protection of the Russian flag. These treaties were confirmed and extended by the Peace of Jassy. Already the Porte had been compelled by its own interest to connive at an irregular practice for releasing many Christian traders from the duties imposed on the commerce of the Rayahs; and policy had even persuaded it to free from all fiscal embarrassments the islands of Psara and Kasos, which were colonised by Greek seamen, and the islands of Hydra and Spetzas, the resorts of seafaring Albanians.\* With the help of Russia the Christian commerce of the Empire flourished when Europe was normally tranquil; and when the

\* Finlay, *History of the Greek Revolution*, i. 205.

revolutionary wars made Turkey for a long time almost the only neutral power, it prospered to an extraordinary degree. By this means the Greeks acquired a large fund of personal experience and western ideas. They became conversant with better social orders and theories at the same time that they improved their own nerve and courage. It became customary among the wealthier to send their children to seek an education abroad; and while riches made political independence more desirable, knowledge and reflection induced a sense of injured dignity.

Between the Greek mind and the enlightenment of last century there existed a natural affinity. Possessed with a pedantic faith in the efficacy of learning, quick of comprehension yet shallow, encyclopædic but incapable of severe application, the Greeks readily participated in the intellectual movement which then passed over Europe. But from this source they could derive only unrest and a visionary philanthropy. Something more was required to invigorate and unify a people whose repute it was to be as jealous, false, and avaricious among themselves as they were servile towards the strong and piratical towards the defenceless. Some deeper and more national agency was necessary to rally round a common standard the ill-used peasantry and the privileged communes, the thriving traders and the rapacious satraps and officials, the patriotic clergy and the traitorous episcopacy. Now it was the fortune of the Greeks to possess a heritage capable of uniting all who spoke their tongue, and suggestive to all their race of the deeds which the

heroes of antiquity achieved against the barbarians. In their most degraded days they had been the least unlettered of the nations, and never had they entirely lost sight of their reputed origin. Now, when external causes had wakened their intelligence, and the fashionable culture of Europe was pervaded with admiration for Classical times, they eagerly studied the language and authors of ancient Hellas. That they excelled not in Classical erudition, according to the standard of more cultivated nations, mattered no more to the efficacy of this their centralising medium than did the want of permanent worth in the productions of the *Sturm und Drang* period affect the potency of that movement over the German people. The study alone touched the most patriotic chords of the nation, and united for once all sections in pursuit of a common object. Tangible proofs of result were afforded by the establishment of numerous Hellenic schools, while palpable indication of a deeper influence was given by the construction of a new modern language, intelligible in every province, which supplanted the pedantic tongue of ecclesiastical bigotry by giving to the people an instrument of intercourse neither confined to the learned nor unequal to the wants of literary expression. Koräes, a native of Chios, was the guardian of this reform. He was the arbitrator between those who desired to retain unaltered the people's dialect and those who advocated a return to the Classical language; \* while he never ceased to wield his pen in behalf of the regeneration of his countrymen. But better known is Rhigas, the poet

\* Cf. Mendelssohn Bartholdy, *Gesch. Griechenlands*, i. 29.

of the revolutionary aspirations which were kindled by the sight of the French Republic. His songs gained rapid and extensive currency; and he was one of the first to plot the liberation of Greece. He was, moreover, the first martyr for the national cause, being betrayed in 1798 by the Austrian police to the pasha of Belgrade. He died, it is said, with the prophecy on his lips that the nation must some day reap the fruits of the seed he had sown;\* and truly from him dated the insurrectionary, as distinguished from the nationalising influence of the literary revival.

It was inevitable that the energy of intellectual progress should be diverted by mortifying reality into the path of revolutionary agitation. The grievous contrast between the ideal and the existent made it impossible for those who laboured for the one to remain patiently harassed by the other. Even the judicious and temperate Koräes was not averse to the methods of force if a favourable opportunity for their employment presented itself. The fiery Rhigas, deluded both as regards the readiness of the Greeks for rebellion and the succour which Bonaparte's oriental campaign might bring to the Sultan's subjects, threw himself into the work of sedition with incautious ardour. A premature victim to the spirit of reaction, he nevertheless bequeathed to his countrymen the plan of secret combination which, though frustrated in the first instance by his death, furnished a model for later and more successful organisations.† In

\* Gervinus, *Gesch. des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, v. 76.

† Mendelssohn Bartholdy, i. 72.

1812 and 1814 were established the two societies which have made memorable the abortive association of Rhigas. The first was the Philomuse society, which was established at Athens for the ostensible purpose of encouraging literature and education, and, with special reference to Lord Elgin's late raid, of preserving the relics of ancient art; \* the second was the Philiké Hetairia, a secret society for the purpose of creating a rebellion against Turkey. But the conspirators for culture were no more able to avoid political action than were the conspirators for revolution, and in their quiet way probably did no less to produce the sanguinary outbreak which belongs to the history of a later period. They proceeded to the high court of nations at Vienna, and there stated the demand of Greece for freedom. They enlisted in their cause much sympathy, and had the satisfaction of seeing the inheritors of the present pay homage to their glorious namesakes of antiquity. They received into their ranks the Tsar and other princes, and bestowed upon them and many ministers the ring of their order. Yet they gained nothing; and they left Vienna in the same capacity as the hired cooks and artists, as discarded amusers of the wealthy and noble.

Then the Greeks knew that they had nothing to expect from the powers in peace, and that they must win their independence by something more cogent than appeals to justice and sentiment. But the Philomuse society was not fit for a turbulent and belligerent work. It could only educate; it

\* *Ibid.*, i. 130.

could not fight. Some different association was required to carry the matter another stage; and this was supplied by the Philiké Hetairia which was established in Odessa by illiterate merchants filled with chagrin by the behaviour of the Congress. It existed at a time when secret societies were thought to be rife in Europe, and thus a fictitious importance has been reflected on it. But, in truth, it possessed no member nor characteristic to lift it above similar combinations of a vulgar order; and it abounded in the corruption and childishness natural to such organisations. Nevertheless it represented the dominant tendency of the nation at the time; it was in the hands of men of action if not of discretion; and, as it hailed from the land of the Tsar, it never scrupled to refer to the Russian autocrat as its abettor. Contemptible it may have been, but not insignificant; undignified, yet not impotent. Its deeds and follies belong to the tale of the Greek revolution itself, but its existence was as characteristic of Greek disgust at the policy of reaction as the *sette* were of Italy's disappointment.

In the Ottoman Empire there were seldom long wanting favourable opportunities for insurrection. In behalf of Servia rebel pashas and janissaries paralysed the Sultan's power; to Greece a mutinous pasha and the disordered state of the provincial militia afforded facilities for revolt. The pasha was Ali, the Albanian ruler of Joanina, who arrived at the summit of his power during this period. In those days all the ferocity and disquietude of the middle ages survived in Albania, and Ali

recommended himself to the Porte by his success in extirpating the lawless chieftains who disputed his supremacy. When leading his contingent against Passwan Oglu, the mighty pasha of Widdin, he discovered the rottenness of the Ottoman power; and he came to the conclusion that by unsparing bloodshed and unfaltering guile he could found a principality of his own before he died. A principality he did indeed win for himself; and in it he wielded that tyranny which suffers no iniquity but its own.\* But his schemes miscarried when his authority seemed most firmly established. He hoped to form a Greek and Albanian kingdom, and renounce all allegiance to the Porte. Ignorant of the formidable character of Sultan Mahmoud, he thought that it would be an easy task to sever all connection with Constantinople; misapprehending the nature of the movement in Greece, he thought that the Christians would willingly make common cause with him against the Turks. But the Grand Signior proved too strong for him; and the Greeks were thinking of other refuge from Turkish tyranny than Ali's despotism and constitutions. Hence the result of his life's villainy was to smooth the way for a Greek insurrection; and his death struggle only created a diversion of the Ottoman forces which aided the outbreak. His fall forms the counterpart to the operations of the Philiké

\* "Albania's chief, whose dread command  
Is lawless law; for with a bloody hand  
He sways a nation, turbulent and bold."

*Childe Harold*, Canto II. xlvii,

Hetairia as the immediate occasion of the Greek revolution.

Though a greater sufferer from Turkish cruelty, Serbia was happier than Greece in preserving its courage and sense of nationality. The brave Serbs had never lost all remembrance of their Empire and the disaster of Kossova; their ecclesiastical constitution, till the Turks warily deprived them of it, kept alive a feeling of unity during their gloomiest days; and their connection with Austria in its wars with the Osmanlis accustomed them to fight for freedom when fighting had most chance of success. The help of the Serbs to bring about the Peace of Passarowitz had, indeed, been rewarded by the transference of a large portion of their country to the Austrian Empire. But this advantage was lost by the Peace of Belgrade; and when they helped to good purpose Joseph II., it was only to meet with similar treatment at the peace of Sistova. Nevertheless, the Serbs won by these experiences in war and civilised government what was far more valuable than the rule of Austria. They gained a sterner spirit of independence, and acquired a more resolute demeanour, which the Turks did not fail to notice when, after the treaty of Sistova, they resumed possession of the country.

The Serbs, however, had at this time no intention of disturbing the Turkish settlement. They were determined only to defend themselves from misusage; and at first they were well satisfied with their condition. When restoring the country to the Porte, Austria had stipulated for a complete



amnesty to all the inhabitants who had taken part in the war against the Sultan. Conformably with this agreement, they received a pasha who seems to have striven to rule the province with mildness and equity; and he was succeeded by another, who won by his solicitude for the welfare of the pashalik the title of the "Servian Mother."\* But judicious appointments from Constantinople were powerless to secure the Serbs from oppression. The Janissaries of Belgrade were the most unruly of their order, and they not only preyed upon the Rayahs, but openly contested with the Spahis for possession of the country.† The last treaty of peace with Austria had provided that they were not to occupy the Servian fortresses on the Austrian frontiers; and the Porte took the opportunity of instructing the pasha to expel them from the entire pashalik. The Janissaries then attached themselves to the rebellious pasha of Widdin, and before long the country was attacked by bands of marauders from this town. At the instigation of the pasha the inhabitants, both Christian and Mohammedan, defended themselves from these attacks. Then protests of the faithful in Constantinople caused the Divan to issue a firman, declaring that engagements with Giaours were not binding, and ordering the Servian pasha to readmit the Janissaries. The Janissaries returned only to harass the land worse than before. They murdered the pasha who endeavoured to restrain

\* Ranke, *History of Servia and the Servian Revolution* (Eng. Trans.), p. 70; Mijatovics, *History of Modern Servia*, p. 10.

† Ranke, *Ibid*, p. 66.

them ; they divided the country among themselves, and strengthened their position by building guard houses and enlisting an army of vagabonds ; and they practised ruthless extortion and violence on the people. The complaints of the Serbs and Spahis compelled the Sultan to remonstrate with them by obscurely threatening them with punishment at the hands of soldiers of a different nation and creed. Hereupon the Janissaries, conjecturing that another rising of the Rayahs was referred to, hastened to massacre all who were likely to prove dangerous to their power. At first overwhelmed with dismay, the Serbs soon organised a valiant resistance, and with the open connivance of the Sultan they victoriously crushed the dominion of their oppressors.

When they had rescued themselves from these ferocious freebooters, the Serbs began to consider some better means of providing for their future safety than a return to the old state of dependency on the Ottoman Porte. They hesitated to obey the Sultan's commands to resume their usual occupations. While they did not contemplate repudiating his suzerainty, they cast about for some more efficient protection. Advances were made to Austria, but failed to receive cordial response ; and indeed, past transactions forbade sanguine expectations of help from this quarter. Application was then made to Russia, who had ever manifested great tenacity in retaining concessions from the Porte, and had vigilantly exercised a protectorate over Moldavia and Wallachia. At St. Petersburg their deputies met with a

favourable reception, and were advised to prefer again their requests at Constantinople, when the Russian ambassador would support them. Thus assured, the Serbs demanded of the Porte, among many other things, the custody of the fortresses which had been the strongholds of their oppressors. The jealousy of Mohammedan opinion, and the suspicions aroused by Russia's representations on the matter, caused this step to be regarded as a declaration of rebellion. But he who was too weak to control the Janissaries was unable to subdue their conquerors; and the forces sent to disarm the Serbs were repulsed with great loss. The insurgents in their turn took vengeance on the dominant race. The Turks of the pashalik of Belgrade were either slaughtered or expelled; and in many other districts the Serbs became masters and the Moslems subjects.

In the protracted conflict which followed, the Serbs became the allies of the Russians. Unfortunately their leaders were induced to place implicit confidence in the Tsar. In the peace of Bucharest they insisted on coming to terms through Russia rather than directly with the Porte. Yet throughout the war the people continued to be guided by the idea that they "should obtain every internal liberty possible without breaking the external bonds with Constantinople;" \* and it was a fatal consequence of the political incapacity of their chiefs that they sought to compass this end by means of the good offices of the Porte's worst foe. Hence the treaty of Bucharest yielded to the Turks the right to

\* Mijatovics, *Ibid.*, p. 33.

garrison the fortresses, while the stipulations in behalf of Servia's internal autonomy took the form of concessions unsupported by any guarantee. The circumstances under which the treaty was made left the Porte at liberty to construe these concessions as it chose; and it commenced by robbing them of all validity by refusing to engage to leave the Serbs their arms, or to assure them against the return of the Spahis.

On the Serbs themselves, then, depended what benefit they should reap from their hardships and sacrifices. These, again, brave as ever and more confident than at first, depended on their organisation for what effective action they could oppose against the armies of the Sultan. Now the original primitive village government of the Serbs had been prevented from adapting itself to the requirements of national administration, not only by the violent nature of the revolution, but also by the ambitions which a military career had generated in the more influential men. The chiefs, to whom victory was due, were unwilling to surrender their authority when the Turks were not present; and the imminence of a return of the enemy caused their pretensions to be tolerated. Yet the rule of such men could not but be rude, grasping, and disunited. Some approach was certainly made to a national government from the first, but virtually the central power was vested in the chief leader on the battlefield. This was Kara George,\* a Servian peasant,

\* Or Black George, on account of his gloomy disposition. Kara is the Turkish word, and Czerni the Servian, for black, but the former is most frequently used in history.

who had passed some time in the Austrian service, and was prospering by the trade of a pig-dealer when the war broke out. As a warrior he deserved the confidence of his countrymen, but as a diplomatist he was childishly incapable of coping with the disunion of his colleagues and the intrigues of the accredited Russian agents. The Skupschtina or National Assembly of the Voivodes, which met annually to conduct the most important public business, appointed a senate to legislate for the nation and to form a supreme court of justice. The senate, again, appointed district courts of justice, and promoted educational establishments to supply elementary instruction, from want of which Servian attempts at statesmanship now very sensibly suffered. Later a separate administration was formed of ministers from the adherents of Kara George: the military chiefs were either displaced or reconciled to subordinate positions; while the Voivodes were made independent of the inferior generals, and responsible only to the senate and the commander-in-chief. Notwithstanding, then, the advantages of a better organised civil administration the Serbs had now to depend for military defence on one leader and his submissive lieutenants, instead of on a number of local captains selected by their individual ability to command and inspire confidence.

The Turks, on the other hand, advanced to coerce them with the armies which had served against Russia. The Servian forces were soon defeated at all points, and Belgrade was left to the mercy of the enemy. Then was manifested again how unfavourable to the production of heroes is a


long spell of Turkish dominion. The Senate, the military chiefs, even the rugged Kara George himself, fled beyond the frontier into Austria; and the people, paralysed by these defections, awaited in trembling the cruelties of Turkish vengeance. One leader alone refused to desert his country in the hour of need. Milosh Obrenovics remained behind to mediate between the despairing Serbs and their conquerors. By craft and corruption he redeemed his countrymen from some of their miseries, though he secretly prepared for a new insurrection. While he pacified the nation, he ascertained that no help was to be looked for from the Powers at Vienna; while he pandered to Turkish avarice, he sought an opportune moment for renewed rebellion. Resistance against Turkish misuse was about to pass into tentative but steadfast efforts to secure entire freedom from Ottoman occupation.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN ENGLAND.

“To produce a state of things in which the physical advantages of civilised life can exist in a high degree, the stimulus of increasing comforts and constantly elevated desires must have been felt by millions; since it is not in the power of a few individuals to create that wide demand for useful and ingenious applications, which alone can lead to great and rapid improvements, unless backed by that arising from the speedy diffusion of the same advantages among the mass of mankind.”—*Sir John Herschel.*

SOCIAL revolutions may be roughly classed as political and economical. Though political movements are never without some economical results, and economical changes surely issue in political modifications, societies as a rule proceed mainly in one direction at a time. The ground-plan of modern continental Europe was especially the work of political agencies, notwithstanding the vast economical changes involved: the groundwork of modern England was primarily the result of industrial progress, notwithstanding the total redistribution of political power ultimately implied. But while the great European Revolution was confined within its own area, the Industrial Revolution of England has been more cosmopolitan than any other event in recorded history. The one was chiefly consequent on decay and wholly directed by an imaginary return to primitive right; the other



was produced by a society, not without a tolerable share of natural equity, pressing forward to utilise the powers which human ingenuity and organisation possessed over physical conditions. Hence, while the first was successful only where certain social evils prevailed, the second has become the birthright of every community which has reached a certain stage of progress. Hence, too, instead of being conducted by warriors and legislators, whose services are limited to their country and age, the English Industrial Revolution was the work of massive popular tendencies which are dominant wherever mankind is possessed of vigour and freedom.

Among industries agriculture is the one which supports all others; and in the days of which we treat, men were still able to regard the cultivation of England's soil as the foundation of English industry. It was therefore an event of the first importance that during the eighteenth century a new system of husbandry and agrarian economy came into operation which bade fair to keep pace with the needs of a rapidly increasing population. At the beginning of the preceding century the cultivation of winter roots had been learnt from the Dutch, and at the beginning of the eighteenth artificial grasses were obtained from the same people; but agricultural improvements were then very slowly diffused, and in the first half of last century English, and especially Scotch, agriculture was still very rude and slovenly. When Arthur Young made his tours in 1768 and 1770 he found in the more backward districts abundant survivals from this period of ignorance. He frequently



reports that draining the water from the furrows of ridged land was not attempted; that ant-hills and thistles were left untouched, and hedgerows were suffered to spread over the fields; that clover and sainfoin were unknown, while cropping followed such a course as 1, break up and sow oats; 2, oats; 3, barley; 4, oats, and then down again,—or else the old-fashioned round of fallow, wheat and beans, which endured on the greater part of the continent till after the period here reviewed. He testifies that the aim of stock-breeders was not to obtain symmetry of form with small proportion of bone and offal, but to produce large frames and long limbs to the entire neglect of the cost of fattening. He complains that cutting straw for chaff was not practised; that sheep were not folded, and rick and dung yards not used; that wheat stubbles were left on the land. He was shocked by the heavy two-wheeled ploughs in general use, and by the great waste of horse-power through ploughing without regard to depth or consistency of soil; by the ignorant use of inordinate quantities of lime; by a common neglect to hoe beans. And he noted with great concern that no regard was paid to the first object of a turnip fallow, namely, cleaning of the land; and that consequently turnips were generally left unhoed—a practice encouraged in some parts by the stupidity of the graziers and butchers, who preferred the small roots of an unhoed crop, in the belief that the cattle ate them with less waste than those which afforded them more than one bite.

But increased demand for agricultural produce evoked a more enterprising system of tillage.

Perhaps, too, as Mr. Thorold Rogers affirms, an incentive to more energetic husbandry is to be attributed to a desire of the country gentlemen to emulate the productive functions of the merchant princes of the eighteenth century;\* and certainly, as Young bears witness, all agricultural improvements were directly traceable to the nobility and gentry. Men with capital consolidated the smaller holdings, and farmed on a large scale with greater intelligence and economy; while in Scotland the abolition of hereditary jurisdictions and the practice of granting long leases encouraged similar operations. Enclosure of land was vigorously prosecuted. Though the change was sometimes effected in a cheaper and more complete manner without parliamentary authority, bills for bringing waste and common-field lands under modern tillage continued to increase till, in the first decade of the century, no less than eight hundred and forty-seven were passed.† Alternate husbandry spread over all England. Green crops, such as turnips, clover, cabbages, and ryegrass, took their place with cereals in an intelligent system of rotation; and experiments were continually made with such fallow crops as burnet, sainfoin, and lucerne. Labour-saving implements received constant attention;‡ drilling

\* *Six Centuries of Work and Wages*, p. 474.

† Porter, *Progress of the Nation*, p. 146. The expenses of a parliamentary enclosure were matters of general complaint, and were instrumental in deterring many enclosures which otherwise would have been undertaken. See the *Report from the Select Committee on Bills of Enclosures*, 1800.

‡ The threshing-machine was invented by Meikle in 1788. Smiles, *Lives of the Early Engineers*, ii. 113.

secured general adoption; and the worth of pains in cleaning, and of manures in restoring, the land became better understood. At the same time permanent improvements of older repute, like draining, liming, and marling, were actively undertaken. Stock-breeding became scientific in the hands of Bakewell and the brothers Colling; \* while increased stock-keeping, facilitated as it was by the new pastures and the introduction of artificial grasses and winter roots, indispensable as it was to produce the quantities of manure which the new husbandry required, was the pivot on which the entire agricultural reform turned. Thirty years after his Tours, Arthur Young wrote—"The great flight has been taken in the last forty years," and "curious it is to me now to travel, and see the marvellous change."† From the wars agriculturists received fresh stimulus to exertion; and capital was laid out more freely than ever on the land. In Scotland the banks, with leases for security, used their freedom to facilitate outlay in agriculture; and the

\* "In 1710, the cattle and sheep sold at Smithfield Market, weighed, at an average, as follows:—Beeves, 370 lbs.; calves, 50 lbs.; sheep, 28 lbs.; and lambs, 18 lbs. Now it may be stated, beeves, 800 lbs.; calves, 148 lbs.; sheep, 80 lbs.; and lambs, 50 lbs." *Report from the Select Committee on the Cultivation of Waste Lands, 1795, Appendix (B)*. Sir John Sinclair, whose words these are, attributes much of this improvement to the improved pasturage afforded by enclosed land.

† *Agricultural Survey of Lincolnshire*, p. 426. These Surveys were made by various individuals for the Board of Agriculture (established 1793, dissolved 1817), which with Sir John Sinclair for president, and Arthur Young for secretary, did much to diffuse information among all connected with the management of land.

farmers, nerved by their superior education, availed themselves of the accommodation and rapidly overtook the more fortunate Southerners. Hence, according to the report of a select committee of the House of Commons in 1813, the agricultural produce of the United Kingdom was increased by one fourth within the preceding ten years;\* and that such a result was due as much to intensive tillage as to extensive farming, was shown by rents rising considerably over one hundred per cent. after all possible influence of war prices was discounted, while the stiff lands, which formerly commanded the best price, fell in value below the lighter soils when managed under the new tillage.†

Meanwhile steam and machinery transformed the conditions and results of manufactures.‡ As the scale of production was raised by improved methods and appliances, the industries received new organisation. Many were superseded by new discoveries; others were surpassed by those more adapted to derive advantage from mechanical improvements. The economy of the textile trade was entirely changed. Formerly wool was the staple product, and woollen goods the most important commodity of England, by reason of the quality of its fleeces and the expertness of its manufacturers. But as mutton came into greater demand, though the weight of the fleece increased with the carcase, and a

\* Porter, *Ibid.*, 149.

† Porter, pp. 151-2. It is said that in Scotland rents were almost trebled between 1795 and 1815.

‡ For the technological aspect of this change see the following chapter.

tardy discovery was made that Norfolk sheep yielded about their necks wool equal to the best from Spain,\* the supply of long or combing wool greatly deteriorated. This circumstance was aggravated in 1802 and 1813 by duties imposed on the importation of foreign wool; and before the century began it was clear even to those, who still regarded the woollen industry as a more important national concern than any other textile manufacture, that it was suffering from languor induced by the difficulty of applying machinery.† The fabric which was gaining advantage over it on this account was cotton. Though mentioned in the records of England some centuries earlier, true cottons were not manufactured till late in the eighteenth century, for the simple reason that English workmen were unable to spin pure cotton threads of sufficient tenacity for warp, and could only use cotton for weft. The delicate fingers of the Hindus could construct webs of exquisite fineness which were the wonder and despair of Europeans; and all genuine cotton cloths in England were imported from India. But a series of inventions produced looms and spinning jennies capable of making cotton fabrics which competed successfully with Indian goods even in the Indian market itself. Further, at the beginning of this century an abundant supply of the raw material from America was ensured by the invention of Whitney's gin, which overcame the troublesome difficulty of separating the fibre from the seeds of the plant, and by

\* Young, *Eastern Tour*, ii. 74.

† Cf. Eden, *State of the Poor*, ii. 477.

the purchase of Louisiana by the United States from Napoleon. Hence though the woollen manufacture advanced, cotton obtained a superiority over the ancient staple which quite changed the relationship between English raw produce and English manufactured fabrics.

Striking as is this creation of a new industry, it was but a conspicuous example of what was taking place in all manufactures. Throughout the textile trades machinery evoked new growths, and new forms of old processes. The Staffordshire Potteries were established on an entirely new basis by Wedgwood's production of a new kind of cream-coloured earthen ware; and to Burslem and the neighbouring villages clay was brought from Devonshire, and flints from the Thames, to be worked up into porcelain for all the countries of Europe.\* The discovery of methods for using coal in smelting and puddling iron, and the consequent removal of the furnaces from the vanishing forests to the coal country, had already founded the English iron trade when the steam engine gave it additional impetus. While in 1740 only 17,000 tons of pig-iron were produced in England and Wales, and four-fifths of the iron used was imported from Sweden, in 1796 no less than 125,000 tons were produced, and in 1806 double that amount. The output of coal was proportionately increased by the growing demands of furnaces and steam engines, and by the facilities afforded by improved methods of ventilation, steam pumps, and the use of more economical means of

\* Cf. Macpherson, *Annals of Commerce*, iii. 380-3.

supporting the roofs of mines. As cause and consequence of this industrial advance was the development of means of transport. London was furnished with adequate docks; and on the coast harbours were constructed and improved. Much was done to repair and extend the highways, though much was left for another generation to do. But in the construction of canals a new era began. Sudden changes of level in the country to be traversed, which had been the main obstacles to earlier engineers, were overcome by Brindley, when making a canal from the Duke of Bridgewater's collieries at Worsley to Manchester, by carrying an aqueduct over the Irwell. The same enterprising nobleman and sagacious engineer also joined Manchester and Liverpool by a water road in spite of still greater difficulties. The pecuniary return to the proprietor from these ventures was very great; and the advantages accruing to trade from them were such that while the charge per ton between Liverpool and Manchester was by road 40s. and by river 12s., that by the canal was only 6s.\* Thus skill and capital were attracted to the work till the greater part of our system of inland navigation was constructed by 1825; and a class of navvies, more efficient for heavy work than any other labourers in the world, was trained in time to give England a commanding advantage in the making of railways.

To these prime causes of the industrial revolution must be added assistant circumstances which greatly promoted its rapid course. The fact that

\* *Annals of Commerce*, iii., 332.

the most flourishing industries were new, or newly organised, favoured their development by protecting them from the restrictive customs and laws which still hampered the older trades and handicrafts. Indeed it was only with modern machinery that modern commercial freedom was evolved, though the factory system in its turn required legislative regulation. The wars, which absorbed all the energies and exaggerated all the wants of Europe, long supplied to production the incitement of a greedy market; and when the System embarrassed continental trade, the ships of Britain sought and found in more distant lands demand for what goods the smugglers left on the hands of the manufacturers. Our mercantile marine grew at a greatly accelerated rate during last century; and the wars, while they temporarily hindered its advance, only conquered a wider field for commercial operations. The same contest, which drew upon England the continental blockade and war with America, added to its colonial empire Ceylon, Malta, Mauritius, the Cape, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Demerara, and Essequibo; while the same period was marked by the foundation of our Australasian empire and an immense extension of our Indian dependency. England's naval supremacy having been confirmed, markets were also safely sought where victory or commercial enterprise had established no welcome station. Thus by the end of the wars the new industrial system had been firmly founded. Manufactories had been built, operatives marshalled, needs created, and the national livelihood made dependent on an entirely new organisation. Never



before had such an extensive advance in technical art and scale of production been made; never before had social changes of such moment been achieved so rapidly or wrought so permanently.

An index to the magnitude of this industrial advance is afforded by the statistics of commerce, population, wealth, and national finance.

\* In 1798 the official value, which is a constant standard, of the imports was £27,857,000; that of the exports was £33,591,000; and of these exports £19,672,000 consisted of the manufactures and produce of the kingdom, and £13,919,000 of foreign and colonial merchandise. This shows the export trade of British wares to have been nearly stationary, for in 1792 the foreign and colonial produce exported amounted to only £6,568,000, while the exports of British manufacture and produce were as high as £18,336,000. In 1800 a great advance in the exports of our home produce accompanied a considerable increase of the foreign and colonial trade. The official value of imports was £30,570,000; that of total exports £43,152,000, of which home produce contributed £24,304,000. In 1805 imports fell to £27,334,000, and total exports to £30,520,000; but of the latter £22,907,000 were of English origin. In 1810, imports rose to £37,613,000, and total exports to £42,656,000; the home produce exported amounting to £33,299,000. In 1815, im-

\* See McCulloch's *Dict. of Commerce*, Art., "Exports and Imports." The figures are not quoted beyond thousands. The official estimates were those made in 1697, when the office of inspector-general of imports and exports was instituted. Real values were first taken in 1798.

ports were £31,822,000; total exports £57,420,000, to which belonged £41,712,000 of home manufactures and produce. Thus in a few years before 1800 the exports of our home industry increased nearly one-quarter; and in the next decade and a half they more than doubled.

\* Increase of population was nearly as remarkable. During the latter half of the eighteenth century, the people of England and Wales multiplied nearly twice as fast as in the previous fifty years; and in 1801, they are estimated to have reached in round figures the number of 9,187,000, including sailors and soldiers. The census, however, being a first attempt, was not very efficiently conducted. In 1811 this number rose to 10,407,000; and the same rate of increase continued for the next ten years. In 1801 Scotland contained 1,599,000 inhabitants; in 1811, they numbered 1,805,800, not including soldiers and sailors. For Ireland no trustworthy accounts of population at this time exist.

The increase of disposable wealth may be conjectured by comparing an estimate, which Pitt formed of the taxable incomes at the close of the eighteenth century, with the amount of the incomes taxed at the end of the war. Pitt's estimate set the incomes at rather more than £100,000,000 a year: sixteen years afterwards incomes exceeding these by half as much again were taxed by the state.† Yet the increase of riches was accompanied by a corresponding increase of national expenditure,

\* See Note on population appended to McCulloch's Edition of Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.

† Spencer Walpole, *Hist. of England*, iii., 4.

and the accumulation of wealth was turned in considerable measure from reproductive employments to the contraction of a vast national debt. Previously to the war, the national expenditure had been about £20,000,000 per annum; in the latter part of the contest it averaged £100,000,000. No tolerable form of taxation could make the revenue keep pace with such an extravagant rate of disbursement; and immense loans were constantly raised. The National Debt was increased by nearly £600,000,000; and the interest on it, with expenses of management, by over £20,000,000 a year. In 1817, at the consolidation of the English and Irish exchequers, the debt was no less than £839,382,145, and it cost £31,591,927 per annum for interest and management. Succeeding generations of British taxpayers have learnt to appreciate pretty correctly the weight of this debt, but at the time when it was principally contracted the nation and its counsellors were under the delusion that, in spite of apparent continual growth, it was being steadily paid off. Pitt passed in 1786 a bill for liquidating the principal of the debt by means of the wondrous powers of compound interest; and though the annual contribution to the sinking fund always purchased stock which had itself been created by a new loan, and, paying for it at the market price, succeeded in losing for the state the sum by which the market price exceeded the rate of issue—a loss which with incidental expenses amounted to over six millions and a half—England and its wise ones continued to believe for many years that the National Debt was being cleared off by a schoolboy's formula.

But while the nation grew rich and prodigal, populous and powerful, the poorer classes of the community suffered grievous hardships. Daily experience and historical investigation demonstrate that of all revolutions an industrial one is most productive of incidental woe; and in this case the misery was enhanced by the harshest operations of change. It was a transition from hand-labour to machine-work; from the small house industry to the great factory system; from considerate custom to implacable competition; from imperfectly differentiated agents in production to the conscious antagonism of land, capital, and labour; from the staid contentment of the country to the feverish rivalry of the town. Like all transitions it bore hardly on certain portions of society: like most, and worse than most, it bore hardest on the lowest and most numerous classes.

These classes were the labouring poor. No other name can describe them more characteristically at this time, though possibly a more exhaustive denomination may be found for those who perform the manual labour of society. It was indeed the grim truth that to be a labourer in those days was to be poor. It was to be poor not in the sense of cheerless subsistence, but in that of grinding indigence or absolute pauperism.\* During the eighteenth century wages were still more or less influenced by the Statutes of Labourers which debasement of the currency and confiscation of guild property had at last put in force in the

\* Cowper, who was well acquainted with the poor of Olney, has left us a pathetic description of the circumstances of a

sixteenth.\* It is true that they began to rise about 1750, but the price of necessities soon overtook the premium which industrial activity placed on obedient service; and before the century closed employers saw that some addition must be made to the workman's regular earnings if he was to continue manageable and willing to rear a progeny.†

Nor were increased prices and a depressed rate of wages the only evils from which labour suffered. Formerly in all the more prosperous counties of England, and they were the majority, there had been great numbers of cottagers who united agriculture with some kind of handicraft within doors.

respectable labouring family living on dry brown bread, with hardly any firing or candles.

“ With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care  
Ingenious parsimony takes, but just  
Saves the small inventory, bed and stool,  
Skillet, and old carv'd chest, from public sale.”

*The Task*, Bk. iv.

In Burns' *Cotter's Saturday Night*, the “weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell,” was “a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.” To foreigners, however, the country presented a prosperous appearance. Alfieri, for example, having in early life passed through Portsmouth, Salisbury, Bath, Bristol, Oxford to London, wrote in his autobiography:—“Il paese mi piacque molto, e l'armonia delle cose diverse, tutte concordanti in quell' isola al maximo ben di tutti m' incantò sempre più fortemente.”—*Vita* (1880), p. 91.

\* See Rogers' *Six Centuries of Work and Wages*.

† In 1801 Arthur Young stated in the “Annals of Agriculture,” that a person living in the vicinity of Bury (Suffolk) was able when he laboured for 5s. a week to purchase with that amount a bushel of wheat, a bushel of malt, a pound of butter, a pound of cheese, and a pennyworth of tobacco. Now with his wages at 9s. a week and 6s. allowance from the parish rates he wanted 11s. 5d. to be able to obtain the same articles. This must have been an extreme instance, yet in 1800 an estimate of the expenses

The irregularity of employment and the uncertainty of results attending agriculture were balanced by constant occupation and gains obtained from some kind of manufacture, which was generally of a textile character. Spinning often engaged the whole time of the weaker members of the household, and the yarn thus produced was woven into cloth by the father and older sons when nothing was to be done on the land. In the woollen manufacture, which was carried on under somewhat similar circumstances by small masters employing a few journeymen besides their own families, business was conducted so soberly that all hands enjoyed a similar immunity from want of occupation. The masters neither worked for orders nor speculated on the vicissitudes of the market, but produced with regularity the supply

of housekeeping at Bury St. Edmunds, compared with those of 1773, showed the following changes:—

	1773.			1800.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Coomb of malt . . .	0	12	0	2	0	0
Chaldron of Coals . . .	1	11	6	2	11	0
Coomb of Oats . . .	0	5	0	1	1	0
Load of Hay . . .	2	2	0	7	0	0
Meat . . . . .	0	0	4	0	0	9
Butter . . . . .	0	0	6	0	1	4
Sugar (loaf) . . . . .	0	0	8	0	1	4
Soap . . . . .	0	0	6	0	0	10
Window lights (30 windows)	3	10	0	12	12	0
Candles . . . . .	0	0	6	0	0	10½
Poor Rates per Quarter .	0	1	0	0	5	0
Income Tax on £200 . . .	0	0	0	20	0	0
	8	4	0	45	14	1½

See Tooke, *Hist. of Prices*, i. 226, 228; *Annual Register*, 1800, App. 94.

which sooner or later would find a demand; and the men, assured of constant employment and treated rather as partners than as day labourers, contentedly worked with the same manufacturers for years in succession, and ruefully regretted their imprudence when the prospect of higher wages tempted them to enter the uncertain service of large factories.

But as the enterprise of capitalists, the introduction of machinery, and minute division of labour, led to production on a large scale, this primitive system was superseded by factory organisation. The safeguards against overtrading, erected by the Statute of Apprentices and kindred legislation, were burst through and finally abolished; customs, which had preserved the equilibrium, at the same time that they hindered the expansion, of industries, were repudiated; and labour passed from under the discipline of a craft to dependence on speculators. Before the invention of the steam engine man frequented the streams or solicited the winds for augmentation of the force to be extracted from muscular tissue; and then the capitalist generally gathered his labourers to some spot where a head of water was available. With the advent of steam-power the factories gravitated towards towns which offered paramount advantages when men had been rendered independent of the faithless wind and water. To these towns flocked all those who sought to earn their livelihood by manufacturing industry. The isolated hand-worker and the small master in the country were unable to compete with the machinery and organised

operatives of the capitalist in the town; and no alternative was left them except to migrate to some factory centre. Here they became tributary to the capitalist, with no resource but their single craft, dependent for bread upon a harsh system of trade which was subject to all the fluctuations of a world-wide market.\*

As the handworker left the country, the country changed much as the towns were changed by his arrival. Capital bought up the small holdings which he and his class had vacated: it annexed those which might otherwise have survived the loss of manufacturing employment; and it enclosed the wastes which had greatly helped the landless men to eke out a contented subsistence. Those cottagers, whose occupation was mainly manufacturing, had already migrated into the towns when the great enclosing period began. Those who had remained in the country had now to choose whether they would join the operatives of the factories or descend to the condition of hinds. What they suffered by losing their rights of commonage is now very difficult to determine, and it certainly varied much with different parishes. Arthur Young, whose vigorous creed of rural economy insisted on high rents, high farming, and high prices, was of course a strong advocate of enclosures; but he was also ready to sanction high wages. He has recorded his observation that the poor man's right of commonage was worth little because the neigh-

\* Cf. Cunningham, *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, p. 399, *et passim*; and Brentano, *On Gilds and Trade Unions*, § v.



bouring farmers have "a right of commonage as well as the cottager; and they take especial care by means of their flocks to starve every animal the poor people can think of keeping;" \* he also cites instances where too great an abundance of common land encouraged laziness and pauperism: † yet he tells of an enclosure conducted in an exceptionally equitable manner which admitted very considerable beneficiary interest of the poor in the commons. The land was in a parish where forty-one houses had a right of commonage over all the open fields after harvest, which totally prevented the use of turnips and clover. "In lieu of rights of commonage, the proprietors of a parish generally divide it among themselves, and give the poor no indemnity;" but in this instance, the squire determined that they should have something valuable in exchange for their right. He allotted each of the old common right houses three acres contiguous to their dwellings, or their other property; and left six hundred acres of old grass common "for these poor to turn their cattle on in a stinted manner," and also one hundred acres for cutting turf.‡ It would seem, there-

\* *The Farmer's Letters*, i., 89. 3rd Ed.

† For example, see *Eastern Tour*, iii., 153. Many similar cases are recorded in the County Reports drawn up for the Board of Agriculture, and in other memorials of the time.

‡ *Ibid.*, ii., 24. In his survey of Lincolnshire Young also speaks of enclosures made around Folkingham, "upon which occasion a proper attention has been paid to assigning every cottager at least three acres of land, including a garden, upon which, for the most part, they keep a cow, and are much better labourers for it" (p. 35). He also cites the observations of a commissibner on the necessity of protecting in an enclosure the small claimant, who "may as well have nothing allotted to him, as to have it

fore, that while the enclosures deprived the day-labourer of a solace, often of a resource,\* they completed the ruin of the manufacturing cottagers.

The agricultural movement, however, failed to obviate any pauperism which excess of commonage may have caused at one time, for it proceeded to diminish the demand for labour by turning arable land into pasture; and, though war prices caused much of it to be broken up again, wages were so little determined by economic laws that increased employment yielded no compensation for famine scarcity. Moreover, the landlords and farmers denied to the agricultural labourers the accommodation which naturally should have been theirs as land became enclosed and rented. The evidence at command does not appear to support the prevalent view that loss of rights of commonage made it generally impossible to maintain small farms and freeholds; but in order to facilitate the collection of their rents, proprietors let their land only to large farmers, and refused to accept cottagers as tenants for a few acres; while in order to keep a better command of labour, the farmers used all their influence to prevent their men from hiring

so far off, or so inconvenient for him, that it is not worth his having, as it would prevent his going to his daily labour" (p. 85). It is well known that sometimes an enclosure was so managed that the small claimants had to sell their shares at a low price to defray their contribution to the expenses of obtaining the Bill.

\* The question provoked a good deal of strong feeling at the time; and Eden found difficulty in obtaining authentic information, but from the meagre evidence he possessed he concluded that the advantages which the poor people derived from commons and wastes were "more apparent than real," that is, more sentimental than substantial.—*State of the Poor*, I, xviii.

small holdings.\* This policy was reported by Lord Winchilsea to have actually dispossessed a great many cottagers in the midland counties of cow-pastures, with the result that the poor-rate "increased in an amazing degree, more than according to the average rise throughout England;" and Coleridge seized upon this judgment to reproach the landowners with dereliction of duty in his "Lay Sermon to the Higher and Middle Classes."† At this time, when the rigorous subordination of labour to capital and economical organisation seemed to be a short cut to universal plenty, the motives of landlords were probably more public-spirited than a spectator would at first be inclined to allow.‡ But the results of their conduct

\* This exclusion has continued to be very generally practised up to the present day. In the first part of the century the legislature endeavoured to encourage the parish authorities to repair the defect in the new land system, but with little effect. Cf. Brodrick, *English Land and English Landlords*, pp. 232-8. Hence the present demand for a strong Allotment Bill.

† Coleridge was equally distrustful of the mercantile spirit in trade itself. In *The Devil's Thoughts*, the pig seen gliding down the river with wind and tide, cutting its own throat the while, is likened to England's commercial prosperity.

‡ The farmer's view was ingenuously stated by Boys in his Report on Kent, pp. 33-5 (2nd Ed). "It is clear," he says, "that any cottager who has two or three acres of land, keeps a cow and two or three hogs, and grows plenty of potatoes, is not much necessitated to labour for others." Hence, if every labourer "could be so accommodated, famine would inevitably be the consequence in a short space of time." On the other hand, Young says in his Report on Lincolnshire, "It is impossible to speak too highly in praise of the cottage system of Lincolnshire, where land, gardens, cows, and pigs are so general in the hands of the poor. Wherever this system is found, poor's-rates are low; upon an average of the county they do not amount to one-

were those of the narrowest selfishness. Irresistibly the labouring population of England, which in its worst times was not without a hope of mending what was bad in one occupation by recourse to another, was now definitely divided into a town proletariat and a degraded peasantry.

In both capacities labour was delivered into the bondage of an unfair treaty with capital. The laws against combination, the enactment of wages, the law of settlement, and the impotency of hand work, deprived of all contractual quality the relations which followed. And doubtless the situation would have been too intolerable to last if some mediating agent had not mitigated the friction of the labour market. Unfortunately, however, the buffer between wage-earners and despair only defended a bad order by making it more vicious in itself, and more demoralising to the people. The Poor Law, which originally passed from exhortation to compulsion,\* had lived to convert charity into cajolery, alms into hushmoney. Relief of the destitute had come to be indemnity to the

third of what is paid in Suffolk" (p. 419). "It is certain that, in numberless places in the kingdom, many a poor cottager would rejoice to give the utmost value for as much land as would keep a cow, if he could obtain it" (p. 414). "They all get cows here without difficulty; 'let them but land, and they will be sure to find stock for it,' was the answer" (p. 411).

\* The legislature seems to have become convinced of the necessity of a compulsory maintenance when 27 Henry VIII. c. 25 was passed. By an Act in the next reign the means of compulsion were ordained to be the authority of the Church; but by 5 Eliz. c. 3, compulsion was put into the hands of the Justices at Quarter Sessions who were empowered to commit to prison. Eden, *Ibid.*, i., pp. 83, 104, 122.

underpaid; and the poor-rate had become an insurance fund against rebellion or starvation of the labourers. As prices increased, employers, instead of raising wages to the level of human subsistence, supplemented inadequate earnings from the poor-box, the cost of which fell on all ratepayers alike, whether they employed labour or not; and Young came across one parish where the farmers had conspired to subsidise themselves for taking into their service handy boys and girls. Owing to this practice, and the restrictions of the law of parochial settlement on the mobility of labour, wages in different parts of the country lost all connection with the different prices of provisions.\* In 1795, when bad seasons and increased demand had raised prices quite beyond reach of the current rate of wages, the Berkshire Magistrates promulgated what is known as the "Speenhamland Act," declaring that the poor required better remuneration or greater assistance than hitherto. They drew up a scale of allowances corresponding to prices of bread and the needs per head of a family, which should either be paid in wages or discharged from the rates. Other counties did likewise; and in the next year an Act of Parliament abolished the existing workhouse test, which since 1723 had prevented in many instances the extravagant growth of pauperism, by empowering the parish authorities to give relief to any industrious person at his own home without forfeiture on refusal to enter the poor house. Labour was now confessed to be the stipendiary

\* Cf. Young: *Northern Tour*, iv. 310; *Eastern Tour*, iv. 328.

of the rates. Some years later the law provided that an unchaste woman might cause the arrest of any man by declaring upon oath that he was the father of her unborn child, in order that he might be compelled to indemnify the parish for the expense which the birth would throw on the rates. Improvident marriages and bastardy were thus directly encouraged. Hitherto the landlords and tenants of a parish had checked marriage by bringing against men who were likely to marry the resources of the law of settlement, and by limiting the number of cottages. They had even induced the opposite evil, which occasioned the Bastardy Acts.\* But when the parish was ready to assume, often to pay a premium on, the burdens and responsibilities of a family; when the liberality of the poor law to bastards made lewdness a profitable practice† and abandoned women desirable matches by reason of the allowances to their illegitimate children, prudence and chastity lost much authority. As the allowance to the needy sluggard often came to exceed the reward of honest industry, idleness, which the old law too frequently had rendered habitual, received additional encouragement. Through the reluctance of em-

\* Malthus agreed with Young that in some instances scarcity of cottages operates too strongly to prevent marriages. (*Essay on Population*, 6th Ed., pp. 307 and 503.) Eden testifies to scarcity of cottages (i. 361); and gives evidence that the great proportion of bastard children seems to have originated generally from the discouragement to matrimony which parochial officers presented by getting young men removed to the places of their last legal settlement, when they seemed likely to marry and bring a family into the parish (i. 181).

† Cf. Eden : *Ibid.*, i., 450.

ployers to pay reasonable wages, labour had been pauperised. Through the same reluctance, united with some regard for humanity and caution, this pauperism was favoured to the disadvantage of industry, thrift, and prudence. Consequently, employers came to find common labour slothful and clumsy, while ratepayers had to bear a tax which rose from being about two millions in 1780 to over four millions in 1803, and nearly eight millions in 1817. In efficiency, morals, and money, society paid a heavy price for the temporary suppression of labour's claims to equitable and worthy treatment; and the founding of England's industrial pre-eminence was accompanied by the aggravation of a disease which has not yet ceased to mar and disturb its social system.

The condition of those engaged in the fluctuating industries of the town was much less influenced by the poor law than that of the regular labourers on the soil.\* Nevertheless, special causes made this period one of great suffering to the manufacturing population. At first, increase of trade induced transient prosperity among operatives, but trouble surely overtook the workmen as machines surpassed the efforts of their practised hands. As the rate of production was accelerated, the market did not at once expand in a corresponding degree. The capitalist had often cause for impatience,

\* "Altogether the assistance which the manufacturing classes obtain for the support of their families in aid of their lowered wages is perfectly inconsiderable."—*Essay on Population*, p. 317. The population, however, which was raised by bounties in the country overflowed into the towns, and lowered wages abnormally. Hence, in Malthus' opinion, the tendency of artisans to combine.

which sometimes was hasty enough to make him send a cargo of skates to Rio Janeiro; but sooner or later the reduced price of his wares opened new markets, and meanwhile he continually found opportunities to sell at great advantage. But the arms and fingers of men and women steadily declined in value before the speed, dexterity, and power, of machines. Hand-workers either found no work to do, or they slaved for a miserable wage. Mill operatives secured better earnings when trade was brisk, but in dull times they were more helpless than hand-workers. Occasional seasons of demand induced great increase of population, while all the time machines were rendering labour temporarily redundant. No effective competition among employers insured to workers considerate treatment; and the law prevented them from obtaining it by combination. We hear of petitions against machinery as early as 1776; Acts for its protection were frequently passed; and the struggle against it was maintained far into the present century. In 1811 very serious disturbances occurred. The starving unemployed men of the Nottingham hosiers and lace manufacturers began to destroy the machines which had too frequently been used as instruments of oppression. The insurrection spread throughout the country.\* Millers, corn-merchants, and provision dealers were added

\* Knitting and lace frames were greatly improved at this time, but machine-breaking in the hosiery and lace trades was no new thing. The knitting frame originated in the reign of Elizabeth from the labours of a student, and it was subsequently developed and adapted to the manufacture of lace and all kinds of hosiery. During the latter half of last century the



to the proscribed machine-owners. The special measures of the government were unable to restore order; and only as work and food became more plentiful did the disturbances subside of themselves.

The uncertainty and inadequacy of the earnings of individuals in manufactures were to some extent caused and countervailed by the utilisation of women's and children's labour. Yet herein lay one of the most lamentable results of the system. In 1796 Dr. Perceval testified to the Manchester Board of Health that the children and others who work in large cotton factories are peculiarly disposed to be affected by the contagion of fever; that they are greatly debilitated by close confinement, impure air, and want of proper exercise; that they are

practice of letting frames on hire became very prevalent. Persons unconnected with the trade would invest in them, and insist on receiving a rack rent for their use. The number of machines was thus increased to suit speculative trading and not the steady demand of the market; but the proprietors preserved their rents by diminishing in slack times the hours of labour, causing the earnings of the operatives to be frequently depressed below the level of subsistence. To obtain more equal terms the workmen sometimes broke the frames of obnoxious individuals, as they had done as early as 1710 to protest against the great number of apprentices taken by employers from parish authorities in order to make the more profit out of machines; and the Luddites only recurred to an old artifice when they sought to ensure better employment by machine-breaking in 1811. See Felkin: *History of Machine-wrought Hosiery and Lace Manufactures*. Attacks on machinery had been made since the early days of the cotton manufacture, but it would be unjust to conclude, as Sir H. Maine does, that universal suffrage "would certainly have prohibited the spinning-jenny and the power-loom." Considering the difficulty which the weavers experienced in getting enough yarn to keep them in employment before spinning by rollers was introduced, bearing in mind the great increase of wages

seriously injured by working at late hours; and that they are generally debarred from all opportunities of education, and from moral and religious instruction. In conclusion, he stated that it appeared from the excellent regulations which obtained in several cotton factories that many of these evils might be obviated to a considerable degree by Parliamentary intervention.\* On account of such representations a Bill, brought in by the elder Sir Robert Peel in 1802, provided that, "In all woollen and cotton mills and factories in the United Kingdom, in which three or more apprentices, or twenty or more other persons, were employed, apprentices should have two complete suits of clothing yearly; that the hours of working should not exceed twelve hours, exclusive of meal times, for which three hours were allowed; that they should be instructed every day for the first four years of their apprenticeship in reading, writing, and arithmetic; that the apartments of males and females be kept distinct; that two only should sleep in one bed; that the rooms should be washed with quicklime and water twice a year, and kept well aired; that at the Midsummer sessions two visitors should be appointed to report

which at first attended machine-spinning, and taking into account how power-looms later became necessary to sustain the demand for yarn, it seems more probable that the apprehensions of the hand-workers, which were only too well founded, would in a popular government have only prevented the too sudden introduction of machinery. Cartwright, the inventor of the power-loom, expressed himself willing to concur in such a precaution; and doubtless it would have obviated much misery. Cf. Held: *Zwei Bücher zur sozialen Geschichte Englands*, p. 606.

\* The text is given by Held: *loc. cit.*, p. 616.

on the condition of such mills and factories, and that copies of the Act should be fixed up in two conspicuous parts of the building.”\* This Act was restricted to apprentices because its immediate cause was an epidemic in Manchester among the factory apprentices, who were for the most part slaves bound to northern mills by the poor-law overseers of the southern counties; and it left unprotected the numerous children whose parents cared not how they worked as long as they increased the family earnings, and whose homes were often darkened by neglect when the mother was a factory hand.

But great as were the evils inherent in the industrial transition, they were hardly more intense than those produced by extraneous circumstances. The recurrence of bad and irregular seasons, from 1765 till the end of the wars, repeatedly forced up prices far beyond the utmost point to which the movement of wages in these times could reach. In 1788 imports of corn first permanently overbalanced exports. In 1773 restrictions on importation were considerably moderated, but in 1791 the landlords succeeded in passing a law which permitted importation at a nominal duty only when wheat was 54s. a quarter, and imposed a prohibitive duty when it was under 50s. In 1804, when the reign of high prices appeared to be yielding, the same legislature raised the standard of free importation to 66s., and imposed a prohibitive duty at 63s. But these measures did little more than indicate the temper in which the landed interest would treat the question of national food supply when trade and

\* Levi: *History of British Commerce*, 179.

production resumed their normal course. Till 1814 bad harvests, the war, and the depreciation of the currency,\* kept up the price of wheat to such a point that the corn-laws were nearly inoperative. At one time wheat reached the price of 126s. a quarter; and the price of the quartern loaf averaged 18d., ranging at different moments from 9d. to 20d. or 22d. In the small purchases of the poor the fall in value of the paper currency operated detrimentally a second time, for tradesmen, being ever apprehensive of a further decline, discounted on each transaction a possible rise of the premium on gold. During this time, when the salaries of clerks and the fees of professional men had much increased, and the style of living had been generally raised among the upper and middle classes, the wages of agricultural labourers were 9s. or 10s. a week; those of artisans in the building and kindred trades were treble this amount, but were less constant. The earnings of manufacturers varied according to the quality of work; but the average differences from year to year, caused by fluctuations of trade, were as 7 to 3, 13 to 9, or 7 to 5, when flour had varied only as 45 to 41.† So little did the workmen profit by the increased productiveness

\* Depreciation of the currency was due to cessation of cash payments by the Bank of England in 1797, necessitated by the emergencies of war, the needs of Government, and a run on provincial banks during rumours of invasion. At first paper bore a small premium, but increased issues brought it by the end of 1800 to a discount of 8 per cent. as compared with gold. In 1810 notes were at a discount of  $13\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and they continued to decline till 1814.

† Baines : *History of the Cotton Manufacture*, p. 439.]

of their labour that, while exports of cotton goods were nearly three times greater at the close of the war than at the beginning of the century, a much less quantity of this, the cheapest kind of clothing, remained behind for a population increased in the meantime by more than two million souls.\*

While high prices were thus distressing the manufacturing population, they were laying up less immediate but more permanent troubles for the agricultural classes. The incentives they afforded to more energetic and extensive cultivation were supported by facilities for obtaining loans which the paper currency provided. The number of country banks increased from about 280 in 1797 to above 900 in 1813; and so boldly did they aid the farmers in their speculations that at the close of the war, when prices fell and agriculturists experienced great losses, no less than 240 of these establishments stopped payment.† The most lasting consequence of this period of inflated agriculture was the consummation of a change in English land tenure which had been supervening since the first rise in prices. "It is a custom growing pretty common in several parts of the kingdom to grant no leases," said Arthur Young in 1770; and he pointed out how prejudicial the change was to progressive husbandry. Such remonstrances came frequently from other observers. But the landlords were too anxious to profit by every advance in prices to fix their rents for more than a year at a time. They persisted in constantly raising rents from year to

\* Porter : *Progress of the Nation*, p. 180.

† McCulloch : *Dictionary of Commerce*.

year; and when a collapse occurred with the return of peace, and a period of great fluctuations ensued under the reign of the corn-laws, the farmers themselves were unable to agree to pay fixed rackrents for more than a year in advance. By the time that the corn-laws departed, the new system was firmly established. The "good understanding" survives to this day;\* and English husbandry is now suffering from the want of stamina and resources, induced by abolishing the class of substantial and improving tenants, which an Agricultural Holdings Act can but slowly repair.

The same influences were mainly instrumental in effecting the removal of the more considerable yeomanry, who had lost little by the decline of house-industry. At the end of last century occupying owners were still very numerous in most parts of England, as the evidence collected by a recent writer has opportunely shown;† and their estates were subjected to the same ordeal as the business of the tenant farmers. The yeomen also borrowed money for speculative farming: they frequently spent it on the purchase of additional land at high prices: they often yielded to the temptation of raising their style of living as they saw the successful farmers doing. Some sold their land forthwith, at a time when land-jobbing was very active and uncircumspect, and embarked in more enterprising trades, or in farming on a large scale,

\* Cf. Wren Hoskyns: *The Land-laws of England in Systems of Land Tenure*.

† Mr. John Rae, who also has exhibited the causes of their disappearance.—*Contemporary Review*, Oct. 1883.

in order to command the means of more luxurious living. The greater number, however, clung to their estates, and involved them in heavy charges, and themselves in extravagances. The fall of prices rendered solvency impossible, and life intolerable to most of them. Their lands were sold to the great landowners, or to wealthy manufacturers and traders, to be consigned to the custody of family settlements, beyond the reach of *bonâ fide* cultivators. Afterwards, too, the few yeomen's estates which withstood the ruin of peace surely passed into the hands of purchasers who paid for social position and not for remunerative employment; and now when reformers debate the possible revival of industrious proprietors they have to go to the Isle of Axholme for pledges of their hopes.

From this brief sketch it is evident that the Industrial Revolution changed England's social system as fundamentally and extensively as any political movement has changed the form of states. The vocation of the country definitely declared itself. Occupations, which hitherto had been pursued only to complete the economy of a civilised society, were now erected into pillars of the integrity and prosperity of the country. The welfare and progress of the nation were entrusted to the exertions of a new class; while those who had formerly been the basis of the economical structure were degraded into members of an industrial organisation, reaching to the ends of the world. In the balance of political power, the new order imperatively demanded corresponding adjustments. But when the revolution commenced,

the landed interest was supreme ; when its triumph was assured the landlords were at the zenith of their wealth and influence. Hence, though the parliamentary organization of the landed proprietors was broken up during the reign of George III., the manufacturing population gained political representation but slowly ; while the revulsion of feeling, produced by events on the continent, retarded most disastrously recognition of the democratic element, proper to constitutional government in an industrial state.

At first industrialism was represented exclusively by the capitalist class. Yet, decided as the antagonism of capital and labour has grown since then, the masses participated in a redistribution of moral power, if not in executive authority. Within the period of revolution, the new aspirant to a share in government had but one enemy, the conservative landlords : it had but one party object, the protection of the majority. While the Whig party approved of the pressure of public opinion from without on parliamentary government, but withstood any proposals for a modification of its oligarchic constitution ; the political creed, which attained articulate expression on the occasion of Wilkes' contest with the House of Commons, declared in favour of direct popular representation within. As soon as the middle class began to feel its strength, it naturally maintained that parliamentary government should be the rule of the majority through their delegates. Thus, to correspond with the new structure of the Whig party, issued the Liberalism to which historians



agree in tracing modern Radicalism. From the Whigs, as we have seen, had sprung a party favourable to popular government; and from the metropolitan constituencies and great counties were sent members to uphold the representative character of the Commons. The party thus formed was not considerable, but its purpose was kept before the country from the time that Chatham gave his adherence to a measure of reform. Under the brilliant conduct of Fox the cause of the people was in no want of effective advocacy; and the justice of its claims was maintained by the younger Pitt. But the very hopefulness of the movement turned to its disadvantage. The growing ardour of reformers induced the formation of leagues to prosecute an agitation in behalf of radical reform; and when the spectacle of the French Revolution confounded in men's minds the thoughts of improvement and anarchy, these societies called up very sinister associations, and heightened the general dislike to innovation. "In Britain," says Wordsworth of this time, "ruled a panic dread of change." From the Birmingham mob up to the Prime Minister the nation was determined at all costs to preserve inviolate the existing order of Church and State. Instead of discussion followed proscription; instead of agitation followed prosecutions; in place of reform succeeded Tory inertia. To the great misfortune of the country, industrialism was cheated for more than a generation of political consideration commensurate with its structural importance in the groundwork of modern England.

Nevertheless, though the industrial revolution failed to be accompanied by appropriate constitutional reform, it was at this period that liberal principles received such statement and illustration as secured their successful application on the arrival of calmer times. Adam Smith elaborated a doctrine of personal and industrial liberty before monopoly and protection were seriously attacked. Jeremy Bentham explored the province of equitable legislation when Blackstone's authority was paramount. The work of the first writer is the foundation of what economical science modern Europe has called to its aid; and must, therefore, be treated as a separate part of its groundwork. The teaching of Bentham, however, so far as it was systematic, was limited by the bounds of strict jurisprudence; and his detailed theories addressed themselves only to lawyers. But the wide-reaching and luminous idea, which was the basis of all he thought and wrote, has become the common possession of all civilized men. Utility had been a recognised criterion of conduct since the days of Epicurus; and in Bentham's own age it possessed advocates of such repute as Beccaria, Priestley, and Paley. Yet it was Bentham who insisted, once for all, that the proper object of all government and legislation is the greatest happiness of the greatest number. During a long life of unremitting industry, in constant intercourse with many of the best minds of his own and other countries, he applied a singularly bold and logical intellect to the moral sciences. In ethics he stated anew the principle of utility, divested of the theological

accessories with which Paley had recently embarrassed it. In economics he is remembered for having unveiled Adam Smith's curious inconsistency regarding usury laws. From jurisprudence he exorcised the spirits of superstition and phantasy, by ridicule and exact investigation. The widest principles and the meanest details were alike the subjects of his rigorous investigation. Referring always to the greatest happiness of man under the conditions of actual human feelings and needs, he elucidated principles of legislation, rules of procedure, and details of practice, which in all their features and circumstances enforced conformity with a rigid test of utility. Some of his more ambitious schemes, such as his draft codes and his design of a model prison, yielded only incidental results: many of his constructive and destructive efforts were marred by want of historical perception. But his main doctrine was convincingly set forth to lighten the ways of all social reformers; and many of its applications were expounded for succeeding generations.

Thanks to the help of Dumont and other collaborators, the principle with its chief corollaries soon became familiar on the continent, and in England and America. Axioms, which are now the immediate intuitions of educated men of all nations, were once truths newly demonstrated by Bentham's logical method. On English legislative reform, both as regards particular points and general tenor, his influence was great and beneficent. Romilly, Mackintosh, Brougham, and James Mill,

were his immediate disciples; and all, who have since put a hand to the work of social and juridical improvement, have consciously or unconsciously recurred to his principles and instructions.\*

The most prominent point of accord between enlightened jurisprudence and society's more civilised tendencies lay in their attitude towards the treatment meted out to offenders against the law. Howard's efforts to cleanse the prisons and defend the unconvicted were in advance of science, but in close agreement with public opinion when once it was awakened; and Elizabeth Fry's later exertions in behalf of elementary prison-discipline were practical results of feelings which sprang spontaneously from the same class of people without regard to theory. In the administration of the criminal law popular resistance outstripped the protests of liberal thinkers, though it only contributed to the further demoralisation of evil-doers. But when writers like Beccaria, Montesquieu, and Bentham had emphasised the fact that certainty is the most important factor in penal justice, the way was pre-

\* "It is impossible," says Sir Henry Maine, "to overrate the importance to a nation or profession of having a distinct object to aim at in the pursuit of improvement. The secret of Bentham's immense influence in England during the past thirty years, is his success in placing such an object before the country. He gave us a clear rule of reform. English lawyers of the last century were probably too acute to be blinded by the paradoxical commonplace that English law was the perfection of human reason, but they acted as if they believed it, for want of any other principle to proceed upon. Bentham made the good of the community take precedence of every other object, and thus gave escape to a current which had long been trying to find its way outwards."—*Ancient Law* (8th Ed.), p. 78.

pared for legislative reforms in harmony with the prevailing sense of right. By the beginning of this century the jealousy of the governing class had assigned death to all trespassers on the rights of property, insomuch that the statute-book contained some two hundred capital crimes, among which were such offences as picking pockets and cutting down trees. This barbarous system defeated itself. Humanity would not permit the full rigour of the law to fall upon all wrong-doers alike; and from prosecutor to judge the course of justice was perverted in order to avoid inflicting the allotted punishment. Great numbers of miscreants were not committed; and of those who were convicted only a small proportion were permitted to be executed. Criminals, aware that their victims scrupled to hand them over to the law, trifled with the risk of being dealt with according to the letter of so-called justice; and crime increased so rapidly that, between 1805 and 1815, committals rose from 4,605 to 7,818 per annum, convictions from 2,783 to 4,883; sentences to death increased from 350 to 553, while actual executions decreased from 68 to 57.\* Yet while society declared to its detriment abhorrence of the Draconic code, Parliament adhered to its method of protecting property. Now and again a voice was raised against the system in the Commons, but it was not till 1808 that Romilly insisted with the authority of science on the more clement views which obtained among his class of citizens. Though moving with the utmost caution, he was at first able to do no more than commute

\* Walpole: i. 191.

death to transportation for life for picking pockets. His attempts to cancel the death-penalty for stealing to the value of five shillings from a shop, of forty shillings from a dwelling house, and for stealing from a vessel in a navigable river, were entirely brought to nought; and the first Bill alone reached the Lords, to be thrown out by the legal advice of Lords Eldon and Ellenborough, and the merciful counsels of the Prelates. Eventually Romilly and his associates obtained the repeal of the Acts which administered death for stealing from bleaching grounds, because, as a petition from the owners of such grounds complained, such offences had greatly increased of late; and of the law which capitally punished old soldiers and sailors when found begging without a licence. Romilly himself was almost driven to despair by the dread of change which hardened the hearts of legislators against the dictates of humanity and expediency, but his patient striving, following as it did the impulse of public feeling, and the teaching of Bentham's principles, ensured in another period a more ungrudging amendment of the law.

Another legislative measure bore yet further witness to the operation of those humane motives which are no less constitutive of the modern social order than an enlightened regard for utility. Abolition of the slave-trade appealed to no personal interest, and it aroused the opposition of many most influential bodies of merchants, shipowners, and planters; it provoked the apprehensions of timid Conservatives, and the suspicions of those who feared to leave any kind of commerce open to

France ; yet it was demanded by a greater number of petitions, it was advocated by a wider consensus of opinion, and it was promoted by more imposing organisation, than had attended any legislative question hitherto. In 1782, the Quakers presented the first petition against the trade, and in the following year the narrative of an eye-witness aroused the indignation of all classes, and prompted an agitation which found capable conductors in Wilberforce, Granville Sharp, and Clarkson. In a few years the question seemed ripe for parliamentary intervention, when anxiety for vested interests, the negro rebellion in St. Domingo, and apprehensions of disturbances in the West India Islands, caused a recoil of sympathy which deferred till 1807 the entire abolition of the British slave-trade. The United States immediately followed this example, and Denmark had already anticipated it ; but it cost Wilberforce considerable pains to persuade other nations to do likewise. At the Congress of Vienna the English Government used all its influence to this end ; and Spain and Portugal, because they declared that pecuniary considerations forbade their renunciation of the trade, were given large indemnities. The traffic, of course, was not at once totally suppressed, and the exigencies of smuggling added new horrors to the passage when importations were attempted ; but slaves experienced better treatment on account of the difficulty of procuring new ones, and Britain had good cause to rejoice over this firstfruit to the world of that spirit of tenderness which had been produced in great part by the religious revival of Wesley among the manufactur-

ing population. As a sign of moral progress, the movement imparted to the new century a distinctive characteristic. Among the few points of the Peace of Utrecht which gave unqualified and unanimous satisfaction in England was the Assiento contract, which made this country the great slave-trader of the world, by transferring from a French company to British merchants the right to supply the Spanish colonies with slaves.\* A hundred years afterwards, as we read in the works of foreign historians, among the rewards seized by the grasping islanders for their obduracy against Napoleon, the general abandonment of the slave-trade was one of the most valued and undeniable.

While it was fitting that the reign of industrialism should be accompanied by the growth of public benevolence, it was essential that public education should not be left neglected. The publication of Rousseau's *Emile*, when the Jesuit schoolmasters were falling into disrepute, had evoked much interest in pedagogics in France and Germany; and a fuller description of Europe at this period would not fail to review the theories and experiments of Basedow, Salzman, Pestalozzi, and Fröbel. But in England scientific methods of instructing the young had received little attention. The means of popular education were still very imperfect, and they were so limited that in 1818 only a quarter of the children had an opportunity of learning the rudiments. Happily for Scotland, this state of things did not extend beyond the Tweed, but on this side of the border it was regarded with approval by too many

\* Lecky: *History of England in Eighteenth Century*, i. 127.



of the governing class. The great social value of diffused intelligence and information was first exhibited by Robert Owen in his wonderful industrial establishment at New Lanark ; and his conspicuous success and talents not only compelled the attention of the world, but secured in England the adoption of infant schools. Owen, however, was much more than a pedagogue. His doctrinal influence and personal career belong to the history of later social reformers ; and his services to education at this period are chiefly remarkable for their close connection with the new industries, and their agency in rescuing the most helpless, yet for the future the most important, portion of the population from degradation and ignorance. But the middle classes were more directly engaged in the work of popular instruction by sectarian rivalry in the use of a mechanical device, than by the experiments and heretical idealism of Owen. In 1797, Dr. Andrew Bell, a clergyman, whom want of assistants had compelled to make the trial, published a pamphlet describing the advantages of using pupil teachers in schools. In the following year Joseph Lancaster, a philanthropical nonconformist, opened a school closely following Bell's monitorial system of mutual instruction. Its success was great ; and the dissenting community, eager to avail themselves of the influence of the invention, immediately applied it in all directions. Most of the poorer classes were quite ready to avail themselves of better means of instruction than they had possessed hitherto, and the Lancaster schools promised to become a formidable proselytising instrument in

the hands of the nonconformists. Hereupon members of the Established Church, alarmed at the danger, initiated a counter-movement, and called upon Bell to organise a system of schools on his principle. Thus a great impulse was given to the cause of elementary education in England. The British and Foreign School Society was founded by dissenters in 1807, and the National Society by churchmen in 1809.\* But, in truth, the success of the Bell-Lancaster method was world-wide. In 1820 there were 5,600 schools thus organised in Europe, not including Denmark, where the system was officially adopted; and in 1829 Europe possessed 10,600 schools; Asia 1,600; Africa 130; America 1,000; and Australia 100.†

If it was repugnant to industrial sentiment for justice to be wildly savage, for slave-dealing to be sanctioned, and ignorance to be countenanced, it was inconsistent with the principle of modern industry's existence to permit the endurance of mercantile privileges. The monopoly of the East India Company had been frequently assailed in former times by those desirous to share in the trade with India, but not till the beginning of this century did the theory of free trade and the circumstances of the corporation supply sufficient arguments to withstand the renewal of its Charter. Clive, Warren Hastings, Cornwallis, and Wellesley had conquered a vast empire only for trade to increase in slight proportion; abuses had clustered around its administration, till extension of domain

\* Walpole : i. 215.

† Henne-Am Rhyn : *Kulturgeschichte der Neuesten Zeit*, p. 383.

seemed only to multiply embarrassments and enrich the company's servants through very dubious practices ; and already the British government had been obliged to place the civil and military administration under a board of control. As the time for the renewal of the Charter approached, the mercantile world was moved by a determined effort to secure freedom of trade with the Indian dependency. It was shown that though the conquests of Lord Wellesley had nearly doubled the Company's revenue, expenses had risen till a deficit of over two millions appeared in 1805, from which time successive bad balances had continued ; while the Company's exports had increased in four years by only some eighty thousand pounds per annum. The demand of private enterprise to be given an opportunity of making the trade yield a better return for the expenses of maintaining it, was so cogent that the Court of Directors concentrated its sophistical defence on the exclusion of merchants from the outports. When, however, in 1813 Parliament heard the Company's evidence and the pleas of the petitioners, only the government of India with the China and carrying trades were continued in the hands of the Company for twenty years ; and permission was given to individuals to trade directly with the presidencies of Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, and the port of Penang, in vessels of 350 tons burden or more. The arguments of the free-traders were demonstrated and the reform consummated by the immediate advancement of British commerce with India to such a degree that in four years, while the Company's

exports to countries eastward of the Cape of Good Hope excepting China declined to £638,382, those of private traders amounted to £2,750,332.\*

This measure was passed when the corn-laws were about to become the pivot of constitutional government according to the interpretation of Tory statesmen ; and it portended a conflict of principles and interests which was to divide English politics till the manufacturing party attained supremacy. But while employers and organisers of labour were ready to withstand the pretensions of the landed proprietors, they travelled but slowly beyond the region of their own immediate interests. Towards the employed they were too often harsh, grasping, and neglectful ; and their representation of the industrial population retained a one-sided character which was defined by over-weening jealousy for the rights of capital. Yet the middle classes were undoubtedly the proper mediators between the old and democratic orders. By their exertions many wholesome reforms, and a great development of society's resources, prepared a better day for the labouring classes, notwithstanding a temporary subjection to the rule of capital. The strength and wisdom of the middle classes lay in their close relation to reality. While the nobility was too far removed from the real business of life to comprehend or approve the conditions of progress, and the labouring population was too absorbed in struggles for existence to obtain a view of society's situation, the middle classes were engaged closely enough with the strife to live to understand the

\* McCulloch : *Dictionary of Commerce*.

first needs of the community, and were sufficiently at leisure to regard with calmness and intelligence the means of their attainment. Hence they promoted the evolution of a social order more free from anomalies, in other words more in harmony with reality, than any former instance of complex civilisation. True, the rank and file often strove, and strove successfully, to thwart the plans of their more enlightened leaders; and it is instructive in passing to note that the most remarkable exercise of the right of petition after the abolition of the slave-trade was to protest by a majority of two to three against emancipating the Catholics. Certainly, too, the middle class never has been, and probably never will be, without need of homilies on sweetness and light, for the simple reason that it embodies the most powerful human forces of a world which assuredly is not very good, as it is not intolerably bad. Still, it must be allowed that when the state of society brings the body in closest connection with the conditions of progress—and that is precisely what was done by the industrial revolution—then in spite of its unlovely errors and shortcomings it will achieve on the whole what is best for the community in the season of its ascendancy.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE INTRODUCTION OF MACHINERY.

“Primo itaque videtur inventorum nobilium introductio inter actiones humanas longe primas partes tenere: id quod antiqua sæcula judicaverunt. Ea enim rerum inventoribus divinos honores tribuerunt; iis autem, qui in rebus civilibus merebantur (quales erant urbium et imperiorum conditores, legislatores, patriarum a diuturnis malis liberatores, tyrannidum debellatores, et his similes), heroum tantum honores decreverunt. Atque certe, si quis ea recte conferat, justum hoc prisci sæculi judicium reperiet. Etenim inventorum beneficia ad universum genus humanum pertinere possunt, civilia ad certas tantummodo hominum sedes: hæc etiam non ultra paucas ætates durant, illa quasi perpetuis temporibus.”

*Novum Organum.*

“On the whole, Man is a Tool-using Animal. Nowhere do you find him without Tools; without Tools he is nothing, with Tools he is all.”

CARLYLE.

THE means and success with which man has at different times encountered the difficulties of making nature subservient to his desires are among the most important elements of his history. And doubtless they would occupy a more prominent position in historical narrative if written history were not under the necessity of eliminating as many constant quantities as possible, and this particular quantity had not remained for ages in succession one of the most constant. But when our own time is approached, the old lines of historical construction are interrupted; the constant becomes the scene of rapid change, the established the victim

of revolution. Especially is this the case with the conditions of man's conflict with his physical environment. Since the middle of last century changes have come to pass which have made civilised man rather nature's conqueror than its drudge and prey. As certain stages of primitive civilisation are wont to be distinguished by palæontologists according to the material from which tools were made, so the present age may be characterised by the complexity of their structure. Whereas once the materials of which tools were made sufficed for their classification, now the number of substances and multitude of parts constituting modern appliances permit them to be generally described only as complex, or machines; and our epoch may justly be called the machine age.

Yet it would be wrong to suppose that in past times men had not essayed to contrive apparatus for sparing and reinforcing their labour. Many were the inventions necessary to equip society before the era of machinery: a few engines of great utility and ingenuity had been produced; and several attempts to anticipate the main contrivances of our time are recorded. Failure, indeed, to impart to tools a high degree of organisation was due not so much to feebleness of individuals as to the unprepared state of society. While an age abounding in a talent affords a rich field for its employment, an age poor in a power is incapable of realising even that which it has. Herein lies one reason why the general progress of society is not more steady and less intermittent; but the art of making and using tools is especially subject to sudden

advances and protracted delays. There is nothing so likely to remain in a stationary condition as tools, and there is nothing equally quick to advance when a fertile discovery has been compassed. In favourable circumstances tools propagate tools with wonderful directness and speed; and in some degree it is on this account that our technological progress has been rapid and portentous beyond example.

Machines either supply motive power, or accumulate it, or distribute it in order to produce a certain result. But as power is indestructible, so it is uncreatable; and mechanical device can only manipulate force which already is in existence. Motor machines only enable men to avail themselves of the energy stored up on the earth in combustible matters, elevated heads of water, and the like. The most primitive form of motor machines are the muscles of animals, which impart to limbs the energy extracted from food. These last again can transfer their force to levers, wedges, and the rest of the so-called simple machines, and by concentration perform tasks greatly beyond the strength of detached efforts. With the progress of civilisation the force of gravity was in some degree rendered serviceable by water-wheels; and later, windmills caught a little of the force which rioted over the face of the earth. But both of these expedients were uncertain in their action and confined to certain localities; and when gunpowder offered an inexhaustible and ubiquitous store of energy, its unmanageable nature made it fit only for blasting purposes and the propulsion of missiles. Still a



hint had been obtained of the wealth of labour which the earth might be made to yield for the service of man. While wind and water had been taught to grind and pump, it had been proved that in inert matter lurked latent energy which only required proper discipline to be capable of lifting the heaviest burdens from human shoulders.

A clue to the problem had been before the world some two thousand years before it was solved by Watt. The expansive force of steam had been known to the ancients, and several attempts to utilise it had been made at different times. Indeed, when Watt commenced his labours a sort of steam engine was extensively used for pumping water out of mines, and its deficiencies were the instigators of his early inventions. So far, however, was the machine from supplying steam-power, that fire and water were only used to create a vacuum by which the weight of the atmosphere was made to work a piston. As perfected by Newcomen this atmospheric engine consisted of a cylinder wherein worked a piston and rod connected with the lever beam of a pump. The piston was moved up to the top of the cylinder by a weight at the further extremity of the lever beam, and down by the atmospheric pressure induced by first filling the cylinder with steam and then condensing it by the injection of cold water. Force was, therefore, conveyed to the lever beam in one direction only, though later the piston was raised upwards by help of the incoming steam alone. At first the operations of letting in the steam and injecting the water were the work of separate attendants, but the impatience of an in-

genious boy led to the connection of the stopcocks with parts of the machinery, the motion of which opened and shut them at the proper times. Hence the engine illustrated the grand idea of automatic organisation, but it contained defects which both limited its employment and forbade its development. As a motor it was imperfect because its stroke was only single acting, because the force of its stroke was rigidly limited by the area of the piston, and the cold jet could never render the vacuum complete. As a practical appliance it possessed the drawback of being very expensive to work on account of the immense quantity of fuel required to produce steam enough to overcome the coolness of the cylinder after each condensation before the next blast could expand sufficiently to expel the air.

It was this last defect which most urgently demanded remedy, and first attracted Watt's attention. The use of the engine extended little beyond pumping water out of mines; and as the shafts sank deeper and the work grew harder, the miners were either drowned out through the incapacity of the engines to keep the water under, or the cost of firing left no margin of profit from their work. In frequent communication with Dr. Black, who was then engaged with his investigations into the nature of heat, and by the aid of a model of Newcomen's engine which belonged to Glasgow University, Watt closely considered the economy of steam-power, and concluded that the waste of heat by the old method was enormous. He found that the greater part of the fuel consumed was expended in over-

coming the coolness of the cylinder after each condensation; and his first inventions provided for the operation to take place in a separate vessel, and for the careful protection of the cylinder from chills. In order to keep up the temperature of the cylinder as high as possible he was led to close its open end and introduce steam instead of air for the purpose of depressing the piston. Thus the machine became virtually a reciprocating steam-engine; and at once Watt grasped the manner by which it might be worked at high pressure, and more economically by expansion.\*

But many years passed and many disappointments were experienced before his ideas were successfully realised. Details of execution continually made further demands on his inventive powers; but he would not have grudged the intense application necessary to render the machine powerful and automatic if he had not been harassed by the difficulty of getting the mechanism executed, and by the indebtedness which his slender pecuniary resources made unavoidable if he was to remain true to his purpose. In those days accurate workmanship did not exist. Artisans used rude tools for rough work; and Watt's ideas entirely outstripped their means of construction, while his designs were frequently curtailed to suit the capacity of those who would have to manage his engines. Against these obstacles the delicate inventor would probably have struggled in vain unless he had received from others moral and material support. From Dr. Black, from Dr. Roebuck, and

\* Cf. Smiles : *Lives of Boulton and Watt*, pp. 133, 146.

Matthew Boulton, he obtained the encouragement and means necessary for the development of his plans till they were in a fit state to meet the demands of the world; and by help of the last a painful period of suspense was passed over till his patent rights were secured and the firm of Boulton and Watt became the manufacturers of the new engine.

As soon as the merits of Watt's engines were demonstrated, a great demand for their services came from the mine-owners. Shafts which were about to be abandoned were worked with renewed activity; old works which had ceased to be remunerative were revived; new mines, which otherwise would have failed, were successfully opened; and all manner of pumping was performed with greater economy. To meet the wants of other industries Watt applied his engine to the production of rotary motion; and he invented his centrifugal governor for regulating velocity, which, with the flywheel originally designed to overcome the dead points, ensured smoothness of movement and uniformity of speed in the execution of all kinds of work. Steam-power immediately passed from being an auxiliary of the pump to being the motor of mills, bellows, tilt-hammers, and the machines in textile factories.

In two of its applications the steam-engine attained new birth. As a means of locomotion by water and land it introduced fresh factors into civilised life, and organised anew the economy of society. The first to be realised was the adaptation of the machine to travelling on a water-road. At that time, the

common roads on land offered great impediments to any kind of vehicle; while the propulsion of boats by machinery had been considered before the steam motor was available. Paddle wheels had been thought of as long ago as the expansive power of steam had been noticed; and several attempts to impart to them sufficient force had been made before the eighteenth century closed. It was one of the last of these experiments which led to the construction of an efficient marine engine. Boulton and Watt themselves were not inclined in their latter years to pass from their arduous success to new speculations, notwithstanding many inquiries from the public after engines for ships.\* But a gentleman of Dumfriesshire, having undertaken to test the capabilities of a paddle-vessel, was induced by the need of more power to try an engine which Symington, a mechanic, had devised. The venture was not without success, and some years later it emboldened Lord Dundas, the Governor of the Forth and Clyde Canal Company, to give Symington an opportunity of doing better still. The new steamboat, called the *Charlotte Dundas*, after the Governor's daughter, was fitted with a reciprocating engine, which was no longer protected by Watt's patent; and at its trial in 1802 it turned out to be a very serviceable craft. Unfortunately, however, the proprietors of the canal persuaded themselves that the wash would damage the banks. The boat was laid up, and further orders from other quarters were lost. Not for ten years was another steamship launched in Scotland. This was the

\* Smiles: *Lives of Boulton and Watt*, p. 440.

*Comet* of Henry Bell, an innkeeper on the Clyde, which was the first of Britain's steam-driven fleet. It was also constructed after Symington's plans, which Bell had studied in the *Charlotte Dundas*; but though steam-packets were soon plying in all directions, the original inventor spent the rest of his life in poverty and debt. Meanwhile steamboats had made their appearance in American waters. Many citizens of the United States had been engaged in experiments on steamships; and Robert Fulton, who is believed to have taken note of Symington's last vessel, succeeded, with the help of an engine from Boulton and Watt, in initiating regular steam navigation in America as early as 1808\*.

Steam locomotion on land was an achievement reserved for another period. Though it had been the first object to attract Symington's attention, though Murdoch made a model locomotive which ran at a high speed,† the attempts of the earlier projectors to construct a serviceable steam-carriage failed through their natural endeavours to utilise the ordinary roads. Yet by this time tramways had been used at the collieries for more than a century; and in 1802 Trevethick actually succeeded in haul-

\* See Thurston: *History of the Steam-engine*, Chap. V.

† Murdoch was the right-hand man of Boulton and Watt. Uniting great mechanical ability with industry and integrity, he was an invaluable assistant in the introduction of the steam-engine. He was one of those who at this time were content to devote the entire service of an energetic mind to industrial progress without being lured by the prospect of speculative gains. His most notable service to society was the economical use of coal gas for lighting purposes. Through his experimental demonstrations, and Clegg's practical applications, gas secured adoption during this period. Murdoch also invented the oscillating cylinder.

ing by a steam locomotive a large load on one at Merthyr Tydvil. But the knowledge that some kind of rail was required, obscured as it was by the frequent breakage under experiment of the light metals then in use, did not produce much practical result at the time. Trevethick, who seems to have mastered the problem, was prevented by want of persistence of purpose from successfully introducing his locomotive. Thinking that want of grip would prevent a steam-carriage from attaining any considerable speed on a smooth rail, and encouraged by a successful experiment by Blenkinsop at Leeds, many engineers devoted their attention to the contrivance of milled tyres and toothed rails. By 1815 more than one attempt to dispense with racks and pinions had succeeded, but at least a decade had been lost by reluctance to follow Watt's example of trying to discover what would do by fearlessly proving what would not.

By means of appropriate gear the power of the steam-engine was easily converted either into very rapid motion or into slow intense effort. But while the increase of speed was indefinitely extensible, a very inconvenient limit was set to the accumulation of intensive force. A powerful engine could make well-turned spindles revolve in well-fitted sockets at an enormous speed, but cogwheels, screws, and levers crumbled and snapped under pressures which the progress of industry renders it more and more desirable to concentrate. Moreover, in cases where concentrated pressure was required to be derived in small increments from muscular effort, the friction consequent on the use

of such cumbrous appliances absorbed an increasing proportion of force. The wider application of steam-power, and the better utilisation of muscular power, alike demanded a machine which could concentrate energy to an intense degree without involving serious loss through friction.

The clue to this problem was also known to scientific students long before its practical solution was arrived at. It was recognised that since fluids exert equal pressure in all directions, a force applied to a small portion of the periphery of a body of water is repeated on every similar portion of the periphery, and that consequently an increment of power may be transmitted through water, so that it is multiplied in the same proportion that the passive surface exceeds the area to which the power is applied. Thus if there be two cylinders, one of which has a bore thirty times greater than the bore of the other, and the mouth of each be fitted with water-tight pistons, whose sectional areas are also as one to thirty, and if the two cylinders be connected together by a tube and the whole interior thus formed be filled with water, a pressure of one pound on the smaller piston will counterbalance a pressure of thirty pounds on the larger piston; and if the pressure on the smaller piston be increased, while that on the larger remain constant, the larger piston will be compelled to give way. In these facts, which Pascal had observed, lay evident means of concentrating power; but to employ them to this purpose required a machine quite beyond the skill of the old artisans. The work was one fit for a great



mechanic rather than a great inventor. Such a position was held by Bramah; and it was from his famous workshop that the hydraulic press issued ready for use. A large cylinder was fitted with a piston which served as a ram. Into this cylinder water was driven by a small force-pump, and pressure was imparted to the ram in the same ratio that its sectional area exceeded that of the pumping piston. Of course what was gained in power was lost in time and space; and the motion of the ram was the same fraction of the motion of the pumping piston as the pressure of the latter was of the former. But the result of concentrating the power of a number of strokes on a given surface was tremendous. The pumping could be done by hand or steam, and only the molecular cohesion of the substance of the cylinder limited the concentration of force. Bramah's main difficulty consisted in the prevention of leakage between the ram and the cylinder, but by means of a leathern collar inserted in a groove round the inside of the cylinder, and so shaped that the more the water pressed, the more the leather spread and the tighter it grasped the piston—a device invented by Maudslay, one of Bramah's pupils—the ram was made watertight till the metal of the cylinder crumbled under the pressure of the liquid. The power of the machine proved competent to lift the heaviest weights, or uproot the largest trees, to rend the strongest cables or rupture the greatest guns; and in its various applications it has assisted all the operations of industry in which steady and concentrated pressure is required.

The old motors, too, experienced the influence of mechanical progress. Both wind and water mills were greatly improved during the second half of last century. Indeed millwrights were the class which possessed most mechanical aptitude, and produced most of the pioneers of modern engineering. Water-mills were especially improved by scientific investigation, to which Smeaton made considerable contributions; and in imitation of the incipient steam-engine, as it is supposed, an entirely new method of utilising water-power was introduced. The use of a piston and cylinder had been borrowed from the air-pump by Papin in his attempts to make steam do work, and had been employed in the construction of the atmospheric engine. Thus probably was suggested the use of a similar contrivance for getting labour out of water-pressure. At any rate, water-pressure engines were at work on the continent as early as 1750, the first being erected by Winterschmidt in the Harz mountains, and the second by Höll at Schemnitz in Hungary. In 1765 they were introduced into England by Westgarth. Their power was derived from a column of water which gave a reciprocating action to a piston. For a long time they were used exclusively as pumping engines, but more recently the reciprocating action has been converted into a rotary movement; and it is possible that they may be turned to many services where a high level water-supply exists, and there is a demand for limited quantities of power.\*

\* Karmarsch : *Gesch. der Technologie*, p. 199.

The extensive use of motor machinery involved a large consumption of metal and fuel. The engines themselves were principally constructed of iron, and their gearing became more efficient and durable as metal superseded wood. Their furnaces required a large supply of coal, and so did the blast works and foundries which produced their constituent materials. In some degree steam-power afforded the means of meeting its demand for minerals by facilitating the processes of mining and smelting. Its application to pumps, bellows, and rollers greatly promoted the output of coal and iron, and increased the net produce from the raw material. But the growth of the mineral industries was more the effect of prior causes. If the earlier methods of extracting cast iron, malleable iron, and steel, from the ores had not been otherwise improved, the steam-engine would hardly have escaped being an abortive invention.

Although the English iron-works suffered considerably in the civil war, the fundamental cause of their decline was want of fuel. The great consumption of charcoal had destroyed most of the available woods, and occasioned legislative prohibitions against the erection of furnaces. In the seventeenth century Dud Dudley invented a process of smelting the ore and making malleable iron with pit coal; but his method failed to secure adoption, and the English iron-trade continued to languish for another hundred years. At the beginning of the eighteenth century Abraham Darby founded the iron-works of Coalbrookdale, for the purpose of

manufacturing cast iron wares which had hitherto been obtained from abroad; and it was in this establishment that the use of coke gradually superseded the employment of charcoal for smelting purposes. It was here, too, that in 1766 the process of converting pig iron into malleable iron was first accomplished by means of coal in a reverberatory furnace. A true puddling furnace, however, was patented by Onions of Merthyr Tydvil in 1783; and in the following year Henry Cort took out his patent for improvements which definitively reorganised the whole economy of the manufacture. Without originating any entirely novel process, he arrived at the modern English method of manufacturing malleable and bar iron by systematising and improving known inventions. At this time the common practice of making pig iron malleable was both wasteful and laborious, besides being dependent on charcoal and a powerful blast. By Cort's system the pig iron is heated by common pit coal in a reverberatory furnace, in which the flame is deflected down on the material by a low-arched roof on its way to the flue, and is there reduced by successive heatings and stirrings to a malleable state, when it is hammered into a homogeneous mass and passed through grooved rollers. The puddling process thus perfected produced metal of first-rate quality, though not so good as the best charcoal iron; and the rollers—which Cort in a previous patent had applied to the forging of large masses—enabled fifteen times as much bar iron to be drawn out in a given time as under the hammer alone, and saved the smaller gauges.

from being consigned to the splitting mill.\* The supply of pig iron had already been increased by the introduction of blowing cylinders in the place of bellows for smelting furnaces. The first set was constructed by Smeaton for Roebuck at the Carron Iron Works in 1760. Fitted with pistons and appropriate valves, and worked by water or steam-power, they propelled air into the furnace by a connected series of strokes so that the blast was practically constant; and such was the effect of their power on the coal fire that furnaces which formerly smelted but ten or twelve tons of pig iron, now produced forty tons, in a week.†

The remaining notable cause of increased mineral production came from without the circle of reciprocating agents, steam, coal, and iron. Before 1815 no efficient means of lighting coal mines had been discovered which did not involve the presence of heat sufficient to explode fire-damp. For more than a century the pits had reached a depth at which fire-damp was found in dangerous quantities.‡ But the most careful and ingenious ventilation was ineffectual to prevent frequent accumulations of the gas; and in the first years of this century a series of murderous catastrophes appealed to those who pursued knowledge to provide the miner with a safeguard against the most formidable of his many dangers. As the demand for coal increased, and mining became more developed, many experi-

Scrivenor: *History of the Iron Trade*, p. 120.

† *Ibid.*, p. 85.

‡ The first explosion in the collieries on the Tyne occurred in October 1705. See Galloway: *A History of Coal Mining*, p. 88.

menters endeavoured to construct a safety lamp. It was Davy, however, who first succeeded in inventing and perfecting the wire gauze lantern, which under ordinary circumstances afforded complete security from explosions.\* Flame, being highly diffused matter in a state of ignition, is cooled by contact with wire gauze and accordingly extinguished. If the gauze be too thin or too hot to cool the flame, the flame will penetrate; and it will do so if projected against the gauze with force sufficient to overcome the resistant coolness. Different flames, therefore, are stopped by gauzes of different mesh and substance. The gauze requisite to prevent the flame of fire-lamp in a miner's lamp from reaching the outer atmosphere, except under very strong pressure,† proved to be sufficiently open to admit the passage of ample air and light. Stretched on an iron frame round the flame in the shape of a cylinder, it forms a lantern which under ordinary circumstances is incapable of exploding any gas which may be without. The gas may enter the lamp and be there consumed, giving very evident indications of its presence, but the flame cannot kindle the outer body of gas unless the gauze become very hot, before which event the miner has had due warning to extinguish his lamp and escape. It was this simple contrivance which Davy gave the miner. He bestowed it with noble

\* George Stephenson very nearly anticipated him.

† Davy carefully warned the miners not to place the lamp in strong currents of gas, and added a screen to be turned on the side exposed to such a danger. See *Works*, vi. 117; and Buddle's evidence before a Select Committee on Accidents in Mines, 1835.

liberality, claiming none of the great remuneration which a patent would have secured to him. Yet the coal-masters could well have afforded to pay him a large premium, for the lamp permitted mines to be worked profitably which either had been abandoned or must otherwise soon have been closed ; and it rendered available for the market a great quantity of coal which had been left in the mines to guide ventilating currents. But Davy was sufficiently gratified by receiving from the north country mine-owners a handsome honorary token of their obligations.

Besides an abundance of raw material the construction and development of machinery required tools of great precision and power. In one respect this need had been anticipated. The first condition of accurate workmanship in metal is the employment of cutting tools competent to execute their tasks with ease and rapidity ; and it was a gain of no small moment to the early engineers that they found ready to their hands a supply of the steel most suitable for working other metals. In the middle of the century Benjamin Huntsman had by intense application discovered the means of producing a steel which far excelled all others in hardness and tenacity combined. He had indeed invented the manufacture of cast steel of the same kind, and by the same method, which obtain at this day. By his investigations the conversion of blister steel into cast ingots through vehement heat was originated in every essential detail of its delicate process. From his own experiments alone he discovered the iron, fuel, furnace, crucibles, and treatment proper

for the purpose ; and by his own energy he created a market for the stubborn product by first selling it to the French.\* Though the present manufacture of crucible cast steel contains some minor improvements, Sheffield manufacturers still maintain that Dannemora iron must be used and the old-fashioned process in clay crucibles followed if the best quality of cast steel is to be produced ; in other words, that Huntsman's material and Huntsman's method still yield better steel for certain purposes than any of the cheaper sorts with which more recent inventions have opportunely furnished engineers and the general public. Instead of superseding Huntsman's steel, it would seem that the diffusion of low-priced steels is calculated to increase the demand for tools of the best cast steel.†

But the best simple tools could not alone turn out accurate work. To construct the new machines well and readily, other machines were necessary ; and their total absence was the cause of much tedious toil and embarrassment to the first inventors. At the beginning, Watt was unable to get a serviceable cylinder bored at all. For long his chief concern was to have the parts of his engine constructed with such amount of accuracy as enabled with great pains a special agent, like Murdoch, to make the machine work where it was wanted. He sought to create manual dexterity by restricting to certain individuals and their children certain kinds of work ; but hand labour was neither sufficiently uniform, accurate, nor powerful to make engine-fitting under

\* Smiles : *Industrial Biography*, Chapter VI.

† Cf. Seebohm : *On the Manufacture of Crucible Cast Steel*.



any circumstances anything but a lengthy and anxious business. The same drawbacks attended the manufacture of all other kinds of machinery. To enable machines to realise their capabilities they required to be constructed with the same resources that they supplied: they demanded, in fact, to be made by machine tools.

This was a want which contained within itself the means of its own satisfaction. The class of men who laboured for the perfection of primary machines were not slow to devise auxiliaries; and soon the rude lathes and boring apparatus of the old smiths and millwrights were supplanted by machine tools which performed their required work with the precision of automata and the power of steam. Various shifts and expedients were adopted by each shop for its own benefit; and the factory of Boulton and Watt at Soho depended entirely upon its own tools and organisation. But in Bramah's shop the manufacture of his tumbler locks induced special attention to exact and uniform work. There were afforded instruction and incitement to mechanical improvement which resulted in the important inventions of Maudslay and Clement for turning by the slide rest, punching boiler plates, cutting screws, and engine planing, with their various applications. The attainment of these objects was also aimed at, and often partially compassed, in workshops of less celebrity. The same wants elicited like expedients from men trained to the same work. Throughout the works of mechanical engineers the principal machine tools were either invented, improved, or eagerly adopted; and by the first quarter of the

century the main appliances of engine work were in use, and only awaited the forgings of the steam hammer to proceed to operations of greater magnitude.\*

The development of steam-power and the iron industries was from one point of view merely the exploitation of England's physical resources. From another point of view it was a natural consequence of England's past social advance. Though abundance and convenient distribution of minerals are highly favourable to excellence in working metals, they were not alone sufficient to produce the industrial phenomena of our age. In France, for example, the iron trade was slow to profit by English improvements, suitable though much of the French iron country was for the new system. Here government incited manufacturers to adopt British methods, and published a description of the various processes; yet "in 1818 only a very small quantity of cast-iron was made with coke, and no wrought iron was prepared with coal," and the production of both kinds had not materially increased since 1801.† Nor was this result entirely due to the difficulties of assimilating a foreign process; for the charcoal blast furnaces were managed at the same time in a most incompetent fashion. But in England society was fully ripe for industrial advance; economical matters had become main subjects of national interest; and it was this circumstance rather than the island's mineral wealth which caused the new departure. In point of fact

\* Smiles : *Industrial Biography*, Chaps. XI.—XIV.

† Scrivenor : *History of the Iron Trade*, p. 185.

the third great English manufacture was an exotic, and its naturalisation was achieved before coal and iron constituted the foundation of industrial economy.

A method of spinning by rollers was invented as early as 1738. The idea retained vitality for the next thirty years; and probably the famous water-frame was its lineal descendant. Nevertheless it was not till 1769 that Arkwright patented his machine for spinning by passing the roving of cotton between two pairs of cylinders revolving at different speeds, in order to reduce the thread to the proper tenuity for it to be twisted by a spindle and wound on a bobbin. The same means were afterwards employed to prepare the roving, that is, wool which has undergone a preliminary twisting and drawing; while the work of first carding the material was already provided for by Paul's carding cylinders, which were now greatly improved. Arkwright's water-frame proved to be most suitable for spinning a hard strong thread for warp; and it was an opportune coincidence that some years before it was patented a machine had been invented by another person for spinning cotton thread sufficiently fine and soft for weft. This was the original spinning-jenny of Hargreaves, which was really a compound spinning-wheel capable of producing a number of threads at a time. The manufacture by machinery of the material of entire cotton goods was now made practicable; but invention did not stop here. Neither of these engines spun thread fit for the finer kinds of fabrics; and it was only by a combination of the two that this end was attained.

Crompton's mule, as it was accordingly called, was nevertheless a very original invention. It reduced the roving by rollers as the water-frame did ; it had spindles without bobbins to give the twist like the jenny ; and the thread was stretched and spun at the same time by the spindles after the rollers had ceased to give out the roving. But the spindles were placed on a movable carriage, the outward motion of which stretched the thread, while the return movement wound it on the spindles.\* Thus the thread was reduced partly by rollers, and partly by traction of the spindles ; and such a much finer quality of yarn was produced that at first the mule was called a muslin wheel. Each mule required an attendant to move the carriage till subsequent improvements rendered this operation automatic. While the mule superseded the jenny, the water-frame retained its position on account of the demand for strong warp when the power loom came into use ; and after experiencing several improvements, its name, which no longer answered to the usual means of motive power, was changed into throstle. Through these inventions and sundry minor ones, yarn which cost 38s. in 1786 was sold in 1806 for 7s. 2d., and in 1832 for 2s. 11d. ;† and the spinner, instead of retarding the weaver as formerly, supplied him with a superabundance of material for his former cloths and all manner of lighter fabrics besides.

But the looms did not long remain behind the frames and jennies. The rapid production of yarn

\* Baines : *History of the Cotton Manufacture*, p. 198.

† Baines : *ibid.*, p. 357.

gave warning that more expeditious means of weaving would soon be necessary ; and the success of spinning and other machinery gave assurance that machine weaving was not impossible. It was these considerations, indeed, which induced a clergyman, unacquainted with mechanics and the process of hand-weaving, to devise an apparatus which was ultimately developed by himself and others into the power-loom. Dr. Cartwright first constructed a rude machine which performed with great expenditure of labour the operations of working up and down the warp, shooting the weft, and beating it home ; but when he inspected a common loom and perceived how easily it was worked by a practised hand, he reconstructed his machine accordingly, and took out a patent for it in 1787. Nevertheless some time elapsed before power-looms became economically successful. It was not till a machine for dressing the warp had been invented that they were made to work without the help of a man to each machine ; and hand-weaving long remained common. In France, too, about this period Jacquard invented a loom to aid the textile industries of Lyons. By this engine the warp was automatically raised and lowered according to the requirements of a preconceived pattern recorded on an endless chain of slips of cardboard ; and it became as useful in the manufacture of figured silks or Kidderminster carpets as the power-loom was in weaving cottons. To remove the last hindrance to the rapid production of cotton goods, the process of bleaching vegetable cloth, which formerly occupied six or eight months, was abridged by the

use of chlorine and lime till it was performed in two or three days. Scheele having noticed the power of oxymuriatic acid, as it was then called, to destroy vegetable colours, Berthollet pointed out its use for bleaching purposes; and the discovery was applied by Watt, Tennant, and others in England. Finally, to secure a ready sale for the finer cotton cloths, printing in colours was made cheaper and more elaborate by the invention of cylindrical pressers.

The use of chlorine in manufactures was one of the applications of chemical knowledge which marked the origin of a new branch of industry. The significance of such an innovation is not exhausted by the fact that a piece of cloth could be bleached at home in a few days, which formerly was bleached in Holland at fifteen times the cost. Its true import, rather, was the nascent development of an economy of chemical manufactures, which has attained the rank of an important system of industries. Some time had to elapse before chlorine took its proper place in the organisation of the alkali trade, but the beginning of the trade itself was contemporaneous with the utilisation of Scheele's discovery. Formerly the potash and soda used to manufacture soap, glass, etc., were obtained from the ashes of plants and seaweed, while the main bleaching agents were exposure and sour milk. The first infraction on this primitive system was the introduction by Roebuck of the method of manufacturing sulphuric acid from sulphur by burning it with saltpetre, and combining the vapour with oxygen and water in a leaden chamber. The price

of the acid was thus reduced to a quarter of its former cost, and a large demand for it grew up as it began to be employed for bleaching purposes in place of sour milk and a good deal of crofting. Its extensive use, however, only occurred when a Frenchman devised a process for manufacturing soda from salt. During the Revolution the importation of soda into France ceased, and the Convention appointed a committee to consider means for obtaining it from indigenous sources.\* It was then found that Leblanc was in possession of a method of manufacture which in all essential points is the same as that generally followed at the present time. The process consists in the decomposition of chloride of sodium or common salt by sulphuric acid in an ordinary reverberatory furnace, by which are formed sulphate of sodium and hydrochloric acid. The sulphate of sodium is then mixed with proper quantities of coal and chalk or lime, and placed in another furnace, where they undergo a process analogous to puddling. The product thus obtained is made to yield up its carbonated alkali by passing water through it. From this liquor soda ash is derived by evaporation, which is then treated in different fashions according to the variety of soda required.

At first the hydrochloric acid gas, which was given off with the sulphate of sodium, was discharged into the air, to poison all animal and vegetable life in the neighbourhood. Ultimately its condensation in water became sanitarily necessary,

\* Cf. Kingzett: *The History, Products, and Processes of the Alkali Trade*, p. 71.

and obligatory by law. But here the alkali trade came into connection with the bleaching industry. The most economical method of obtaining chlorine is by the action of hydrochloric acid on peroxide of manganese; and thus the waste product from the first process of soda-making came to provide the basis of the manufacture of bleach. The growth of this system of industries, perfected as it has been by continual saving of labour and products, is a notable phenomenon in the economical history of England, and in a smaller degree of Europe. The war, and the taxes on salt and soap, prevented Leblanc's process from obtaining immediate adoption in this Island, but after the repeal of the former duty the alkali trade developed with great rapidity. Soda, which in 1814 cost £60 per ton, was obtainable fifty years afterwards at £4 10s. per ton; bleaching powder, which was worth about £100 per ton at the beginning of the century, fetched in the middle about £11 per ton; while sulphuric acid passed in the course of a hundred and thirty years from £128 to £6 per ton. In Great Britain the salt consumed for all purposes has increased since 1800 from 16lbs. per head to 72lbs. per head; while since 1791 the consumption of soap per head has risen from 3.1lbs. to 10.0lbs., the price having fallen from £76 per ton to £22 per ton, and the quantity exported having increased from two million to thirty-nine million lbs.\*

In two other great industrial improvements the tendency of England's social condition to favour

\* See Kingzett: *ibid.*, pp. 74, 243. Mulhall: *Dictionary of Statistics*.



mechanical progress was especially apparent. The inventors of printing and paper-making machines were foreigners; but it was only English capital, enterprise, and needs, which at this time were capable of bringing their ideas to a practical test. König, the contriver of the first steam printing press, was a German, who had striven vainly to obtain means to make experiments in his own country; and he repaired to England only after he had proved that he would find no better encouragement in Russia. Established in London, he soon discovered a printer who was induced by the prospect of commercial advantages to furnish funds for a trial press. The attempt suggested a more elaborate scheme; and with the assistance of a countryman possessed of much mechanical skill, König at length produced a steam-driven machine in which the ink was distributed by rollers and the impressions were rapidly taken off by means of a cylinder. The type was set in a flat frame, which travelled beneath the rollers to be inked, and thence under the cylindrical presser to meet the paper which was conveyed round it. Moving to and fro, this "forme" gathered ink and imparted impressions as fast as its great weight would permit. The invention answered to urgent wants of commerce and public opinion. Printing presses had received little or no improvement till Earl Stanhope made his iron press in 1798, which was worked by levers instead of a screw. The iron press excelled in the quality of its work, the best printing being performed by similar means to this day; and it effected a considerable saving of labour and time.

But it met the wants of journals and cheaper literature in a very small measure. When König's machine was brought out, the utmost exertions were unable to strike off impressions of the *Times* at a rate sufficiently rapid to supply the demands of the public on all occasions. Under the conduct of the younger Walter this journal had recently assumed those responsibilities towards commerce and the public mind which are the main functions of the modern daily press; and its rapid and independent supply of intelligence was proving of great value to industry and trade in the disturbed state of Europe. The newspaper had in fact become an element in industrial economy, and like all other great operations of industry it needed the help of machinery. For some time the proprietor of the *Times* had been seeking assistance from inventors; and he gave the first order for König's improved machines as soon as the invention appeared capable of satisfying the requirements of his journal. The *Times* of Nov. 28th, 1814, was thus the first newspaper printed by steam. On this occasion the machine impressed 1,100 sheets in the time that was usually expended on 300; and subsequently by help of some improvements it attained the rate of 1,800 impressions in the hour.

The inventor, having gained so much by help of enterprise and capital, lost through commercial unscrupulousness his fair pecuniary reward. König found that the patent laws, to which he had once attributed England's superiority in mechanical improvement, did not secure to him the enjoyment of the profits from his invention. Like so many

others of this period, who spent their lives and means in contriving complex tools for the use of society, he failed to obtain a recompense from the nation whose necessities he had opportunely relieved; and he returned in disgust to his native country, where he established a printing-machine factory which became after his death a very flourishing business.\* Later improvements dispensed with the heavy flat oscillating "forme," and reverted to the continuously revolving cylinder used in printing cotton fabrics; but it is from König's press that our rapid printing-machines have sprung.

The paper-making machine was the invention of Louis Robert, a clerk in Didot's factory at Essonne. The Frenchman was more fortunate than König in being spared the mortification attending the elaboration of his conception, for Gamble, Didot's brother-in-law, undertook to patent the invention and get it perfected in England. Gamble secured the assistance of the firm of Fourdrinier in the venture; and by exhausting their resources the invention was embodied in a practical machine, though not before the patent had ceased to confer any benefit. The appliances of the old paper-making industry had experienced little improvement since the introduction of the art into Europe; and before the completion of Robert's machine every sheet of paper was made by hand from pulp as it came from the rag engine. By the new method, the pulp is conveyed from the vat, where it is kept in constant readiness by revolving paddles, into a trough by

\* See Smiles' Memoir of König in *Men of Invention and Industry*.

means of a wheel fitted with a number of buckets. Here it is strained by a sieve, and is thence conducted on to an endless moving wire plane. This wire web distributes the pulp evenly over its surface, by a gentle vibratory motion ; and as it travels onward the pulp loses much of its moisture by filtration through the interstices, it becomes more consistent, and is at last received by two pairs of pressing rollers, from out of which it issues unfinished wet paper. At first, hand-labour dried and finally prepared the paper for market, but afterwards cylinders of polished metal heated by steam were added, and over these the paper was conducted till it was perfectly dry and ready to pass over the glazing rollers, whence it was rolled off as finished paper. While hand-made paper retained some advantages of its own, that made by the machine was produced in sheets of unlimited length and great width, and with such economy of labour and time that the work of weeks now occupied minutes. In the seventeenth century England's supply of paper came chiefly from abroad ; in the next century home production hardly equalled consumption ; by the use of Robert's invention, England competed successfully with other countries, and came to import the raw material in large quantities. Machine-made paper was the counterpart to steam-printing among the mechanical causes of more diffused information and intelligence. Its cheapness counter-acted to some extent the injurious effects of the paper duties, and helped the new presses to exert their full power, while its great lengths made possible still more rapid printing.

The foregoing inventions were the chief agents in the introduction of modern machinery. Attended by minor contrivances and improvements, they established a system of industrial production which has rapidly imposed itself over all the efforts of civilised men to obtain necessities and gratifications. For the most part they were primarily the work of men who desired to apply their abilities to alleviating labour and want rather than to amassing wealth and ministering to luxury. They resulted from constructive instincts united to a manly desire to execute thoroughly well the tasks which genius prompted. Among the great mechanical inventors, Arkwright only manifested the talents and passion for organising the labour of others to his own advantage. Boulton, who made of Watt's invention a commercial success, possessed great business abilities, but they ministered solely to a delight in industrial generalship. Roebuck, who at an earlier period was the guardian of the embryo engine, also essayed to organise industry on a large scale, but his dominant motive was the practical application of scientific knowledge. When more original inventors engaged in manufacturing enterprises they did so in order to bring their work to perfection, and accordingly they experienced the losses which invention as a rule involved. Nor was it otherwise with those who conducted the great operations which gave modern England its first canals, roads, harbours, docks, and bridges. These invented civil engineering as truly as inventors originated mechanical engineering. They were likewise men of humble birth, and the costly nature of their

undertakings prevented them from speculating for profit. But none the less did they apply themselves with the greatest diligence and singleness of purpose to their vocation. Satisfied with payment, which for Brindley but slightly exceeded a millwright's wage, and for Telford only sufficed for a respectable competence, they spent their whole energy on devising and superintending the removal of physical obstacles to society's welfare and development. Certainly the projectors they instigated and served were generally actuated by hopes of great gain, yet even here the idea of development for its own sake had a place, and in the first instance, though the Duke of Bridgewater did not reduce his income to that of a resident engineer without a firm belief that his venture would ultimately increase his wealth, the thought of making man's dwelling-place more commodious cast into insignificance anticipations of personal enrichment.

But the system assumed a new character as soon as it was made available for the general public. The elevation of society was lost sight of in a feverish desire to acquire money. Beneficial undertakings had been proved profitable; and it was now assumed that a business, so long as it was profitable, did not require to be proved beneficial. The sophism suited vulgar inclinations, and its authority became a principal force in the social dynamics of modern Europe.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE NEW POLITICAL ECONOMY.

"The nutrition of a commonwealth consisteth in the plenty and distribution of materials conducing to life. . . . Plenty dependeth, next to God's favour, merely on the labour and industry of man."

*Hobbes.*

"Ad hanc autem comparandum vix unius-cuiusque vires sufficerent, nisi homines operas mutuas traderent. Verum omnium rerum compendium pecunia attulit. Unde factum, ut eius imago mentem vulgi maxime occupare soleat; quia vix ullam lætitiæ speciem imaginari possunt, nisi concomitante nummorum idea tanquam causa."

*Spinoza.*

EMPIRICAL psychologists are familiar with a tendency of the human mind to mistake means for ends. The most common form of this intellectual confusion is the miser's vice, which in some measure degrades the greater number of individual lives when rapid production of wealth offers especial incitements to unintelligent avarice. But to confound the acquisition of money with the enjoyment of life is a perversion too vulgar to need either support or correction from reason, and the fallacy does not come within the range of serious controversy till it appears as a force in national policy. Yet the belief that money is wealth, and the only wealth, has vitiated the government of states as fundamentally as it vitiates the conduct of individuals. Prohibitions against export of the precious

metals were common from the time when rulers supposed that they were able to promote directly the increase of riches. In modern times, when trade with the East rendered imperative transmission abroad of a certain quantity of specie, it was still held that the prime object of foreign trade was to attract into a country a balance of gold, silver, and precious stones. Hence arose a regular commercial creed, professed by statesmen, merchants, and savants alike, which regarded all international trading as a contest for the world's treasure. Hence issued commercial restrictions, known as the mercantile system, the object of which was to make trade profitable to the nation by taking care, as Bacon said, "that the exportation exceed in value the importation, for then the balance of trade must of necessity be in coin or bullion."\*

But the injurious effects of the mercantile system were not limited to the derangement of the natural order of commerce. Since a country's prosperity was held to depend on the success with which it impoverished others by depriving them of their treasure, it became an axiom that the welfare of one's own land is incompatible with that of other

\* *Letters and Life of Francis Bacon*, ed. by Spedding, vi. 49. This remark occurs in the first version of Bacon's letter of advice to Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. In the second version of the same letter, the same idea is more explicitly expressed as follows :—"Let the foundation of a profitable trade be thus laid, that the exportation of home commodities be more in value than the importation of foreign, 'so we shall be sure that the stocks of the kingdom shall yearly increase, for then the balance of trade must be returned in money or bullion.'"—*Ibid.*, vi. 22.



nations. The humanitarian, Voltaire, lamented, "telle est la condition humaine, que souhaiter la grandeur de son pays, c'est souhaiter du mal à ses voisins. Il est clair qu'un pays ne peut gagner sans qu'un autre perde." \* A savage spirit of commercial rivalry was engendered between all peoples whose mutual advantage demanded frequent interchange of goods. At one time the greater number of wars were undertaken with the direct purpose or covert desire of subjecting opponents to mercantile drawbacks, or of making enemies desist from tactics supposed to be hurtful to home trade. Governments were perpetually striving to outwit one another by means of arbitrary regulations in their endeavours to secure a disproportionate influx of treasure; and wars when discontinued on the battle-field were too often only transferred to the custom-houses on the frontiers. The governments, too, who had the effrontery to believe that their restrictions and encouragements could induce an unearned balance of wealth from without, were not afraid to attempt to improve the economy of production within. Some industries were favoured in preference to others, some were controlled to the behoof of certain classes, or to the injury of foreigners, some were treated as if they were pernicious, and others were granted subventions. The main ostensible object of statesmen, was to make a country capable of supplying its own wants, but their motive was not so much to avoid being dependent on foreigners for neces-

\* *Dict. Philosophique*; cited by Say, *Traite d'Economie Politique* (1814), i. 155.

saries as to escape paying them money, or, as the phrase went, to be tributary to them. This reliance on the artificial organisation of trade was further prejudicial to a natural disposition of industry, by obscuring the evils of monopoly and defending the restrictive usages of guilds and corporations, when rendered harmful by the progress of society. It attained its most illiberal form in the current colonial policy of the day, which treated settlers like bondmen of the mother country, and essayed to obtain the exclusive benefit of their wants and produce, by imposing on them all manner of preposterous industrial regulations.

Till the beginning of our age no material advance was achieved in economic theory. Neither speculative absurdity nor mischievous consequences had been able to discredit the mercantile system; and meanwhile, discussion only served to add refinements to its application. Men, who were engaged in commerce, invariably fell into its fallacies as soon as they passed from their special business to the consideration of national policy as a whole: professed politicians were too much influenced by the voice of vested interests, the sophisms of erring authority, and the tendencies of habit, to correct its inferences by results, or its principles by criticism. Some writers exposed clearly enough certain of the prevailing misconceptions, and enunciated many of the fundamental propositions of economic science, but they failed to subvert the structure of the system, or to develop their truths into a comprehensive theory. They possessed no proper notion of the scope and end

of political economy to guide their investigations, or to check their conclusions. Their partial discussions discovered detached truths, only to lose them again in defective treatment of other isolated questions. Moreover, they generally lacked the business experience which would have added weight to their observations. In nearly every case the announcement of new truths was the achievement of mere students. Yet when a better doctrine of the production and distribution of national wealth was arrived at, it was by the exertions of a purely theoretical thinker. Since then, no doubt, the new political economy has manifested many shortcomings, because it has remained in the hands of men who have adhered to the doctrinaire method without extending their view of facts commensurately with their advances in deduction. The present inadequacy of economic science is certainly traceable to its academic origin. Though the founder of orthodox political economy was the first man to repudiate narrow formalism and mathematical limitations, he could not help being a pure theorist; but while this circumstance has had an injurious effect on the work of his successors, it must never be forgotten that it was the principal reason why a man of his power and perseverance was able to overthrow the dogmas of the mercantile system, and establish truer principles in their stead. If the science is justly chargeable with incapacity to meet present needs, if it even be guilty of having contributed to the creation of present difficulties, it can at least point to a time when it destroyed by mere force of reason the blundering

prejudices of vulgar practice; and it may thus claim a presumption, that it may yet again become capable of correcting the errors of the past, and introducing the improvements of the future.

While many of the particular tenets of modern political economy had been fruitlessly anticipated by earlier investigators, its general aims had also been placed in view unsuccessfully by a school of contemporary writers on the continent. In France, a notable attempt had been made to set aside the mercantile system by a true theory of national economic polity, deduced from fundamental principles, and organised into a symmetrical code of laws. The basis of this doctrine was that which would naturally commend itself in France at the middle of the eighteenth century. Sully had once sought prosperity in agriculture; Colbert had promoted the development of manufactures and commerce; Law had brought to the people a delirium of wealth and the misery of bankruptcy by his adventurous use of paper money, and his mischievous confusion of credit with capital. The financial catastrophe shook men's faith in the mercantile system, since money began to be suspected of being no self-sufficient agent; and it caused manufactures to be regarded with apprehension, because they had been sorely injured by derangement of the circulating medium. The land, however, had remained stable. The land, too, had been steadily growing more productive of wealth, by being subdivided both by normal purchases and the flood of Law's fictitious capital, although its cultivators suffered acutely from pro-

hibitions against exportation of corn, and other regulations belonging to Colbert's policy. Further, the vices, extravagances, and gambling propensities, which characterised the refined life of the time, caused earnest men to desire a return to the rude virtues and unpretentious competence of agriculture. The new school, therefore, naturally reverted to Sully's maxim, that "tillage and pasture are the breasts of the state ;" and in accordance with the governing ambition of the day, it endeavoured to deduce from this patriarchal principle a simple and complete system of financial and industrial policy.

The author of the famous dictum, "*Laissez faire et laissez passer*," is said to have been Gournay ; but the merit of trying to found it upon a comprehensive conception of the nature and sources of wealth chiefly belongs to Quesnay. Of the same party were Turgot, Mercier de la Rivière, the elder Mirabeau, and several others, who were distinguished by more or less insistence on particular points of their common creed. Starting from the principle that the earth is the sole source of wealth, and that labour applied to land is the only productive labour, they concluded that all other labour was sterile and supported only by the surplus which remained from the products of labour on the land after all expenses had been paid. Hence they distinguished the economical organization of society into three classes : the proprietary class of land-holders, the productive class of land-labourers, and the sterile class which subsisted by receiving a portion of the net produce of the land in exchange for their services in working up and

transporting the products of the soil. Accordingly, they reasoned, to harass by regulations this last class was useless, because it was impossible to increase wealth by manipulating that which could not produce wealth ; and inexpedient because increase of friction in the business of the class would entail a corresponding demand on the fund which sustained the stipendiary members of the community. To tax the sterile class; moreover, was obviously impracticable, since everything exacted from it only occasioned greater expenses to the possessors of the earth's produce; and to make the attempt was folly, because such a circuitous route to the real depositaries of wealth must involve great loss in the course of collection. Thus the remarkable conclusion was reached that the sterile class must be freed from all restrictions and taxation. Nor were the productive class of land-labourers to be embarrassed by taxes or regulations. They secured no more of the produce they raised than was sufficient recompense for their trouble and outlay, so that all charges made from them were in reality deductions from the surplus which remained with the landlord ; while impediments to the efficiency of their labour only detracted from the fertility of the sole source of wealth. There remained, therefore, only the proprietary class of landowners to tax. These were the depositaries of the entire fund from which the state could draw supplies : to these came the net product of the soil, the only disposable surplus. On the land should fall all the burdens of government. By going to the

prime source of wealth, and by freeing all the operations of industry and commerce, the collection of a revenue would be attended with least expense and smallest prejudice to the powers of society.

The theories of the physiocratic economists are remembered for their practical influence as well as for their relation to modern political economy. The short ministry of Turgot was a zealous effort to realise them. Many of the revolutionary *cahiers* called for the utmost simplicity of taxation by means of a single impost on land; and the fiscal faults and reforms of the earlier revolutionary governments were in great measure due to such views. In Baden, Charles Frederick applied to three villages Quesnay's *impôt unique*; and in pursuance of the rest of his teaching drained a marsh near Carlsruhe, and refused to join the Suabian corn trade system in 1796.\* In Italy, though it was here that the French economists encountered perhaps the ablest opposition, their doctrines obtained the most successful application through the pleading of Bandini, a prior and independent thinker. Advocating like the physiocrats the cause of the cultivators of the soil, and suggesting a direct tax on landlords, Bandini demanded that the Siennese Maremma, the swampy and malarial character of which had almost prohibited cultivation, should be relieved from heavy indirect duties and restrictions on commerce in grain. Under

\* Roscher : *Gesch. der National-Ökonomik in Deutschland*, p. 485. Kautz, *Die Geschichtliche Entwicklung der National-Ökonomik*, p. 360.

Leopold his suggestions were carried out, and the cultivators of the Maremma soon became more numerous and comfortable, while the land itself became more fertile.\* Joseph II. was also influenced in his attempted reforms by the spirit of the French economists, though he was chiefly guided by the doctrines of the old school. He paid the physiocrats the compliment of ploughing with his own hand a field, which was decorated with a monument to commemorate the event, and in theory he professed allegiance to their principles ; but in practice he was mainly controlled by Sonnenfels, one of the most capable representatives of the mercantile system.†

Though the free-trade consequences of the physiocratic theory proved beneficial wherever they obtained adoption, both criticism and the test of fiscal experiment showed that it was insecurely founded. Its axiom that the earth was the sole source of wealth could not justify the conclusion that taxation should be levied on land alone, for the state needs not only a certain quantity of raw produce but also much else which the earth cannot directly yield. And if the state cannot satisfy its necessities from the land, wealth cannot properly be defined as the produce of the soil. In fact, the physiocrats blundered over their analysis of wealth, and so deprived of support their doctrine of *l'impôt unique*. At the present time a similar theory of taxation has been put forth with considerable cogency, but it has owed its plausibility to the

\* Cf. Twiss : *Progress of Political Economy*, p. 155.

† Roscher : *Ibid.*, p. 631.



assertion that landowners obtain by the exercise of their monopoly what Quesnay called the *produit net* of the labour of society. Resting upon a particular doctrine of rent, this scheme of taxation demands discussion on a settled scientific basis; that of the French economists, being dependent on a false definition of wealth, was refuted by the first step towards science itself. Nevertheless the error of the physiocrats was the next best thing to truth. It at least impeached the greater errors of the mercantile system; and it certainly would have effected many improvements in the practice of government if it had not discharged the higher function of preparing the world for the reception of the true principles of political economy.

In 1776 Adam Smith published "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations." Without making any pretence to precise nomenclature or formal construction, this treatise first brought economics within the boundaries of science. It gathered up all the sporadic facts which earlier observers had noted, and organised them under fundamental principles into a consistent body of reasoned knowledge. In order to effect this great work Smith confined his attention to certain classes of phenomena, and forbore from dealing with those kindred subjects which together constitute the matter of sociology. In his hands political economy was concerned only with the production and distribution of wealth by the operation of man's acquisitive propensities; and just as in his theory of ethics he had regarded exclusively the sympathetic side of human nature, so now he

assumed the action alone of the desire "of bettering our condition, a desire which, though generally calm and dispassionate, comes with us from the womb and never leaves us till we go into the grave."\* Hence the science he created has been reprobated with the most defamatory epithets for neglecting what is highest in man; yet unless he had circumscribed his subject by this application of the analytic method, he could hardly have accomplished his object. Life, it is true, is an orgaoic whole, and economics, though principally concerned with man as a greedy being, must miss part of its subject if it refuse to reckon with the rest of his nature. With progress the scope of the science may expand till it merges in that of sociology; but so intricate are social phenomena that this class of facts would never have been brought within the reach of scientific treatment unless the great Scotchman had insisted upon starting from the arbitrary hypothesis that man is revoltingly selfish. Further, to increase his mastery of the subject, circumscribed though it was, Smith employed the deductive method; and consequently his school has incurred the reproach of trifling with geometrical abstractions. Yet he himself drew his conclusions deliberately and warily, not by blind logical progression; while his learning and sagacity brought theory at every point into contact with facts, and added to the directness of deduction all the checks and resources of induction. It is not Smith's fault that the beginnings of science are narrow, or that his successors

\* *Wealth of Nations*, McCulloch's Ed., p. 151.

X often failed to apprehend how abstract laws only represent general tendencies, and require most careful qualification in the passage from pure to applied economics.

The opening sentence of the "Wealth of Nations" declared the fundamental principle which distinguished its doctrine from the mercantile and physiocratic systems. Wealth is never precisely defined in its pages, but from the outset it is assumed that "every man is rich or poor according to the degree in which he can afford to enjoy the necessities, conveniences, and amusements of human life;"\* and the work begins by asserting that "the annual labour of every nation is the fund which originally supplies it with all the necessities and conveniences of life which it annually consumes, and which consist always either in the immediate produce of that labour, or in what is purchased with that produce from other nations." This truth had been enunciated by Locke, Serra, and others, but its value had been overlooked through neglect to proceed further with its analysis. Smith, on the contrary, immediately pointed out how the abundance of wealth obtained by a society was regulated first by "the skill, dexterity, and judgment with which its labour is generally applied, and, secondly, by the proportion between the number of those who are employed in useful labour, and that of those who are not so employed." In the first of these circumstances, division of labour is the most important factor, of which an illustration is afforded by the manufacture of pins. In point of fact, however,

\* *Wealth of Nations*, p. 13.

all trade, both domestic and international, is simply division of labour; and thus every civilised man is more or less a merchant, and every advanced nation a commercial society.

Extensive division of labour is profitable only in a wide market through the employment of a medium of exchange. Hence it is of importance to determine what is the real measure of exchangeable value, "or wherein consists the real price of all commodities." After division of labour has thoroughly been established, it is but a very small part of the necessities, conveniences, and amusements of human life with which a man's own labour can supply him: "the far greater part of them he must derive from the labour of other people; and he must be rich or poor according to the quantity of that labour which he can command, or which he can afford to purchase. The value of any commodity, therefore, to the person who possesses it, and who means not to use or consume it himself, but to exchange it for other commodities, is equal to the quantity of labour which it enables him to purchase or command. Labour, therefore, is the real measure of the exchangeable value of all commodities." . . . "Labour was the first price, the original purchase-money, that was paid for all things. It was not by gold or silver, but by labour, that all the wealth of the world was originally purchased; and its value to those who possess it, and who want to exchange it for some new productions, is precisely equal to the quantity of labour which it can enable them to purchase or command." . . . "But, though labour be the real measure of

the exchangeable value of all commodities, it is not that by which their value is commonly estimated.”\* Quantity of labour is too abstract and indeterminate a notion for such a purpose; and money, the universal medium of exchange, supplies a standard which the “higgling and bargaining of the market” applies to each commodity as required. While labour, therefore, is the real price of commodities, money is their nominal price.

As division of labour involves exchange, so exchange involves the distribution of what is produced. The distribution naturally takes place among the agents concerned in the process of production, namely, the labourer, the capitalist who sets him to work, and the landowner who lends the use of his land. Labour and capital are employed in the production of every commodity, and in most cases land for which a rent is charged; though it is not necessary that all three factors should be owned by different persons. The satisfaction of these different claims to a share in a product constitutes the natural price of every commodity, for the natural cost of any article is just what has been spent on its production in wages, interest, and rent. But the market price of commodities is not so simply determined on account of the variations between supply and demand. Still competition and the mobility of capital and labour continually impel the market price of all things to gravitate towards the natural price. Herein consists the regulating force of industry. It is the competition of every man in striving to make the

\* *Wealth of Nations*, pp. 13, 14.

best of his labour, capital, or land, which determines for the most part the amount of the respective shares of the different agents in production, and ensures that while no department of industry is over-profitable or neglected, none shall be permanently underpaid or excessively pursued.

It is further, according to Smith, on the administration of capital that "the proportion between the number of those who are employed in useful labour, and that of those who are not so," depends. The number of useful and productive labourers "is everywhere in proportion to the quantity of capital stock which is employed in setting them to work, and to the particular way in which it is so employed." Every prodigal is "a public enemy, and every frugal man a public benefactor," for "parsimony, by increasing the fund which is destined for the maintenance of productive hands, tends to increase the number of those hands whose labour adds to the value of the subject upon which it is bestowed. It tends, therefore, to increase the exchangeable value of the annual produce of the land and labour of the country. It puts into motion an additional quantity of industry, which gives an additional value to the annual produce."\*

Now the capital stock of a society is either fixed in machinery, buildings, improvements of land, acquired abilities, etc., which yield profit without changing hands; or it is circulating, and affords a revenue only by changing masters. To the latter kind of stock belongs money, because by means of it all others "are circulated and distributed to their

\* *Wealth of Nations*, pp. 149, 151.

proper consumers," though it would seem more correct to consider it as fixed capital, since in its function of "the great wheel of circulation" it closely resembles a machine. As the engine of industrial transactions money demands most careful and thrifty management. But this is not to be accomplished by multiplying pieces of precious metal, for any increase in the quantity of current specie really leaves the capital of a country as it was before, though a greater number of coins may be necessary for conveying a portion of it from one hand to another. "The deeds of assignment, like the conveyance of a verbose attorney, would be more cumbersome; but the thing assigned would be precisely the same as before, and could produce only the same effects." The substitution of paper, however, "in the room of gold and silver money, replaces a very expensive instrument of commerce with one much less costly, and sometimes equally convenient. Circulation comes to be carried on by a new wheel, which it costs less both to erect and to maintain than the old one." \*

Pursuing this line of argument, Adam Smith concluded that the proper attitude of government towards industry and commerce is that of non-interference. By analysis of production he proved that the necessary economical processes take place automatically: by criticism he demonstrated that all attempts to improve them artificially are futile and injurious. He condemned all restraints on labour, such as the privileges of corporations, statutes of apprenticeship, and the English law of

\* *Wealth of Nations*, pp. 122, 125, 126, 157.

parochial settlement, by showing that they cause work to be inferior in quality, more costly to the public, and less remunerative to the labourer. The fallacies of the mercantile system, and the consequent restrictions on commerce, he attacked with unsparing severity ; and he accumulated a mass of reasoned evidence in favour of free-trade between countries and with colonies which was the main agent in bringing about that state of commercial freedom in Great Britain, the entire restoration of which he himself regarded as absurd to expect as "that an Oceana or Utopia should ever be established in it." "No regulation of commerce," he maintained, "can increase the quantity of industry in any society beyond what its capital can maintain. It can only divert a part of it into a direction in which it might not otherwise have gone ; and it is by no means certain that this artificial direction is likely to be more advantageous to the society than that into which it would have gone of its own accord." "All systems either of preference or of restraint, therefore, being thus completely taken away, the obvious and simple system of natural liberty establishes itself of its own accord. Every man, as long as he does not violate the laws of justice, is left perfectly free to pursue his own interest his own way, and to bring both his industry and capital into competition with those of any other man, or order of men. The sovereign is completely discharged from a duty, in the attempting to perform which he must always be exposed to innumerable delusions, and for the proper performance of which no human wisdom or foreknowledge could ever be



sufficient; the duty of superintending the industry of private people, and of directing it towards the employments most suitable to the interest of the society." \*

The negative results of the "Wealth of Nations" were qualified by exceptions in favour of the English Navigation Act and usury laws. The first was justified on the ground that defence is "of much more importance than opulence;"-but the second was unaccountably maintained in the teeth of those principles which it was the work's great object to establish, as Bentham conclusively pointed out. Smith's positive application of his own doctrines was confined to the consideration of taxation. His theory of production, like that of the French economists, showed that the incidence of a tax often reaches a point very distant from that originally contemplated. His discussion was far from being exhaustive, and it laboured under serious errors which were for the most part due to defects in his first principles; yet it furnished valuable guidance to ministers of finance, and enunciated important fiscal maxims which were systematically outraged by European governments before the Revolution. Taxes, Smith declared, should be contributed by individuals in "proportion to the revenue which they respectively enjoy under the protection of the State;" they should be certain as to amount, time of payment, and manner of collection; they should be levied with least inconvenience to the contributor; and "every tax ought to be so contrived as both to take out and to keep out of

\* *Wealth of Nations*, pp. 198, 207, 311.

the pockets of the people as little as possible over and above what it brings into the public treasury of the state." If the Revolution had not introduced more equitable principles of taxation, the new political economy would perhaps have achieved as much for fiscal justice as it did for industrial freedom: and without scientific aid equity would certainly have failed to produce a tolerable apportionment of the expenses of government.

To trace the practical influence of Adam Smith's doctrines would involve a critical analysis of the economical history of all civilised states during the present century. Within the period under review it was necessarily much curtailed by stress of war and the commercial policy of Napoleon. But in England it became immediately operative in the administration of Lord North, and in that of Pitt, who was a professed disciple of Smith, and was assisted at the Treasury by George Rose, the secretary under North; \* while it appeared in the deliberations of the Legislature from 1783,† and in 1786 it gained memorable expression in the short-lived commercial treaty with France. The reforms in Prussia were practical applications of the same kind, insomuch as they were less tributes to sentiment and the rights of man than remedies prompted by a belief that national prosperity is best promoted by freeing land labour and exchange, which was transmitted from the *Wealth of Nations* to Prussian bureaucracy through Krauss, a professor of Königsberg. The financial policy of Speranski in Russia,

\* See Dowell: *History of Taxation*, II., 166-73, 182.

† Cf. Buckle: *History of Civilisation*, II., 195.

repudiating as it did juggling with the currency in favour of straightforward efforts to liquidate debt, indicated the wide range of the book's practical effects; and the treatise of Storch, written at the request of Alexander for the instruction of his brothers, was a token of the diffusion of its teaching. At the Congress of Vienna the fact, that the interest of each community is promoted by the welfare and intercourse of all, received such recognition as marked a new phase of diplomatic dealing; and although the crudest economical errors were still widely prevalent, as was manifest in the painful struggles of the Austrian Government to escape bankruptcy, there was evinced at this period a general sense of the insufficiency of the old principles, and a leaning towards *laissez faire*, which were clear signs of a fresh factor in the structure of Europe.

But while the new political economy was competent to exert immediately a beneficial influence on the conduct of national affairs, it was far from being either scientifically exact or practically complete. Many corrections, additions, and formal improvements were necessary to obtain even that amount of extension, definiteness, and consistency which prematurely challenged public confidence about the middle of the present century. Of the additions made to [Smith's general doctrine none were more notorious than the corollaries which Malthus deduced from] the ratio obtaining between increase of population and increase of food. Adam Smith and many other writers had noticed that the human species has a tendency to multiply up to the

level of the means of subsistence. Condorcet, indeed, had perceived that the fact was a rock of danger in the way of his anticipations of human progress, and he had endeavoured to steer clear of it by treating the difficulty as a physiological problem.\* But it was not till 1798 that the *Essay on Population* demonstrated how the circumstance contained the explanation of much of the misery which was often assigned to the consequences of social institutions. Indeed, unless Rousseau, Condorcet, Godwin, and others had imputed all the evils of vice and misfortune to our social system, and the English poor law had manifested the dangers attending erroneous beliefs concerning the principle of population, Malthus probably would never have entered his emphatic and elaborate protest against heedless reproduction. Certainly his remonstrance would have been less vehement at first, less elaborate in later years, and less uncompromising throughout the controversy which it provoked. Yet he did but state that men tend to increase in a geometrical ratio, or as the numbers 2, 4, 8, 16; while the production of food cannot be increased

\* "Si on suppose qu'avant ce temps les progrès de la raison aient marché de pair avec ceux des sciences et des arts, que les ridicules préjugés de la superstition aient cessé de répandre sur la morale une austérité qui la corrompt et la dégrade au lieu de l'épurer et de l'élever; les hommes sauront alors que, s'ils ont des obligations à l'égard des êtres qui ne sont pas encore, elles ne consistent pas à leur donner l'existence, mais le bonheur; elles ont pour objet le bien-être général de l'espèce humaine ou de la société dans laquelle ils vivent; de la famille à laquelle ils sont attachés; et non la puérile idée de charger la terre d'êtres inutiles et malheureux."—*Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain*," p. 364.

faster than in an arithmetical ratio, or as the numbers 2, 3, 4, 5; and that the disparity between these two different orders of increase is overcome by the action of moral restraint, misery, and vice. His teaching did but recommend that the first of these checks should be adopted by rational beings in preference to the hideous alternatives which nature never fails to impose.

Nevertheless Malthus' treatment of the subject proved very nauseous to his generation. He wrote when lawgivers, confounding cause with effect, as they did in the case of money, believed a teeming population to constitute a powerful and prosperous nation because strong and flourishing countries were always populous; when legislation, therefore, indiscriminately favoured national fecundity; when public opinion was averse to deliberate abstinence from marriage, and individual inclination was encouraged to neglect the motives of prudence; when philanthropy and ordinary compassion ignored the remoter consequences of indiscreet charity.\* But in truth he was, to use Blanqui's epigram, no more desirous that society should be a convent than he was that it should be a warren. He was, too, quite aware that a people's standard of comfort may be raised in course of the progress of civilisa-

\* In 1796 Pitt, in a well-known speech, brought forward a bill for the relief of large families as "a matter of right and honour" to "those who, after having enriched their country with a number of children, have a claim upon its assistance for support." Owing to the representations of Malthus and Bentham, Pitt withdrew his bill for direct relief; but he made an abatement in respect of children in his general income tax of 1799

tion no less than its level of misery may be depressed by inconsiderate propagation. He did not overlook emigration "as a partial and temporary expedient" \* for relieving a congested population; nor could he fail to perceive how industrial improvements were providing for increasing numbers of consumers. Still he offended much by insisting on the truism that a redundant population has no natural right to the means of subsistence, and that the English poor law should be abolished gradually: he offended yet more by showing parentage to be no blind spontaneous function, but the weightiest of responsibilities, whose assumption should be most anxiously considered.

The Malthusian theory of population was rather an elucidation than a correction of Adam Smith's treatment of its subject, but it was closely connected with a very important emendation of the "Wealth of Nations." The tendency of people to multiply beyond present means of subsistence frequently involves resort to fresh and inferior land, or the expenditure of more capital and labour on that already under cultivation, as was happening in England at that time on an unusually large scale. The question then arises to whose behoof does such an expansion of industry principally conduce? Who profits most by increase of agricultural produce, and the growth of population and manufactures which it supports? Do labour and capital enjoy the whole proceeds of their more strenuous application? Now Adam Smith had said that "as soon as the land of any country has all become

\* *Essay on Population* (ed. 6), p. 292.

private property, the landlords, like all other men, love to reap where they never sowed, and demand a rent even for its natural produce."\* Such extortion, he had represented, forms a component part of the price of most commodities, though more than once he seems to be on the point of adopting a more defensible opinion. Hume immediately perceived that this assertion was inconsistent with the principle that labour is the real price paid for everything; and it was evident that from Smith's teaching no light could be derived concerning the results attending a more laborious and skilful cultivation of land. A truer theory of rent was published by Anderson as early as 1777, but it attracted no attention till it was independently arrived at by Malthus and Sir Edward West. This theory, moreover, was not assigned its proper position in a corrected scheme of political economy till Ricardo published his "Principles of Political Economy and Taxation" in 1817; and accordingly it has been identified with this writer's contributions to the science.

The Ricardian doctrine holds that rent is no part of price, and might be abolished without reducing prices in any degree. Rent is simply the surplus produce of land after capital and labour have received their current rate of remuneration. The quantity of this surplus varies with the quality and other circumstances of the soil. Society must cultivate a certain area of land with a certain degree of intensity in order to obtain food, but there is always a point where the less fertile soils

\* *Wealth of Nations*, p. 23.

and the most costly tillage cease to yield a return exceeding the expenses of farming and transport to market. This margin of extensive and intensive cultivation shifts with the demand for agricultural produce; and, speaking generally, there will always be some land and some capital employed which yield no surplus to serve as rent. It is the point where rent reaches zero that determines the rent of all other soils under cultivation. Since capital and labour possess a considerable amount of mobility, the profits of agriculture are approximately the same throughout any country. Farmers will not hire land unless they have a fair prospect of realising the average rate of profit, but they will bid against one another for farms till the landlords can exact all that their land will bring forth over and above this average rate of profit. Hence rent is merely the transference to a certain class of individuals of so much produce as is due to excess of the land's fertility over that of the least fertile soil under cultivation. The same cause which adjusts rents ensures that prices will remain the same whether rent is paid or not. At market, produce from the best lands sells at the same price as that of equal quality from the least favourable soils; and the price of this last is regulated solely by the cost of production, and is not influenced in any degree by rent which it cannot afford to pay. Hence, further, as the increase of population causes less productive agriculture to be remunerative, the better soils become relatively more fertile and capable of paying a higher rent. The landlords receive in the first instance the disposal of the



additional produce which the expansion of society has evoked, and only through their expenditure do the landless men obtain its use.

Resort to inferior soils is due to the fact, expressed as the law of diminishing returns, that usually every additional application of capital to land is accompanied by a decreasing rate of return. A limited area, therefore, cannot be rendered indefinitely more productive; and even when the needs of society can be met by applying more capital and labour to the same ground, the landlord will still command whatever accrues from the use of capital above that yielded under the most disadvantageous circumstances, in the same manner as he commands whatever accrues from land above that yielded by the least fertile soils. In short, as Ricardo said, "the rise of rent is always the effect of the increasing wealth of the country, and of the difficulty of providing food for its augmented population."\* At the same time it must be remembered that rent, as here conceived, is levied only on the use of the original and indestructible qualities of the soil, and does not include interest on capital sunk in improving the land, building homesteads, etc. Yet much of what generally goes under the name of rent consists of interest on such expenditure; and if Ricardo's doctrine exhibits landlords from one point of view as the reversioners of society's hardly-earned prosperity, it at least exhibits them from another point of view as stewards who see that the land of the community is made as productive as is necessary under varying

\* *Works*, p. 40.

circumstances. Nevertheless the same theory maintains that the more landowners' gain as stewards, the more they can exact as monopolists. The wider the margin of cultivation extends, the higher is the rent they can obtain for the soils already in use. Though the principle does not characterise them as purposeless extortioners in the manner of the *Wealth of Nations*, it certainly suggests a doubt whether their functions might not be discharged by some less insatiable agent; and it proved that as a governing party they were not to be trusted with the power of controlling the people's means of obtaining cheap food from abroad.

The knowledge that rent is not a component part of price enabled Ricardo to apply, more consistently than did Adam Smith, the principle that labour is the real measure of exchangeable value; and to determine more precisely, by aid of the Malthusian theory of population, the relations between capital and labour, and the effects of taxation. As he defined with greater distinctness the antagonism between the interests of landowners and those of the rest of the community, so he made more evident the conflict involved in the distribution of wages and profits. His services to monetary science were also very considerable; and though his customary style of exposition was not attractive to laymen, he was fortunate enough to popularise more correct ideas concerning this part of political economy on account of the attention which the consequences of the suspension of cash payments had elicited. It was, indeed, his criti-

cisms and the report of the Bullion Committee, which first instructed the public mind in the practical application of scientific reasoning to financial matters. But his general method was dangerously abstract, and his contributions to deductive science were made at the cost of bringing into fashion too narrow a use of analysis and too slight a regard for the complexity of real life.\* His doctrine of rent, for example, while he rightly made it the most important theorem of political economy, needs to be applied to practical questions with greater circumspection than impulsive reasoners and impatient critics can command. Nevertheless, the hasty generalisations of Ricardo's pupils were but illusions of pardonable confidence in an improved organon for the investigation of economic phenomena. Without some scientific apparatus of formal principles, human intelligence is unable to cope with the diversity of social life. Such instruments Ricardo and his followers fashioned for political economy with much success. They have become more valuable as the accretion of well-considered qualifications has diminished their hypothetical character, and brought them more closely in contact with reality; but without their guidance, avowed or not, neither the conclusions

\* Mr. Bonar has recently shown that Malthus was controlled by the opposite tendency; that owing to his love of qualifications, and a golden mean, the writer of the *Essay on Population* has not met with the honour which, as a general economist, he deserved, and would have obtained if the absolute method of Ricardo had not proved more attractive at the time. See *Malthus and his Work*.

of the historical school nor the ideals of socialists can endure the test of criticism.\*

On the continent the new political economy found a skilful expositor in J. B. Say. Recasting the doctrines of Smith in a more symmetrical form, the Frenchman was able to add few material improvements of his own, but he developed with much felicity his master's views on trade. It was especially appropriate that a countryman of Voltaire and Montesquieu should render this service to international intercourse;† and Say atoned for much of his neglect of contemporary advances by the success with which he secured assent to the truth that the industry of all nations is made more

\* Mr. Sidgwick has embodied in his *Principles of Political Economy* the additions and qualifications which up to the present time have been made to the science since Mill's treatise did the same thing a generation back. The function of abstract principles has been well stated by Mr. Marshall in *The Present Position of Economics*. For a treatment of the subject of this chapter from a theoretical and quite other point of view than that of historical significance, see Dühring's *Kritische Geschichte der Nationalökonomie und des Socialismus*.

† The great publicist had declared in a chapter on the nations to whom commerce must be disadvantageous, that "un pays qui envoie toujours moins de marchandises ou de denrées qu'il n'en reçoit se met lui-même en équilibre en s'appauvrissant; il recevra toujours moins, jusqu'à ce que, dans une pauvreté extrême, il ne reçoive plus rien . . . l'argent ne revient jamais, parceque ceux qui l'ont pris ne doivent rien."—*Esprit des Loix*, liv. xx. chap. xxiii. Pombal again declared that "nations that deal with one country either gain or lose—ruin or are ruined." (See Smith, *Memoirs of the Marquis of Pombal*, I. 116.) It must be remembered, however, that the moral ascendancy of England over the Portuguese had created such an anomalous system of commerce and industry that Pombal's arbitrary interference was productive of great benefit to his country.

productive by extending division of labour and enlarging the common market, and that wealth is to be increased by liberal exchanges with prosperous neighbours as well as by augmented production at home. Incidentally he gained association with an important corollary from this principle by advancing his theory of *débouchés* against the mischievous apprehension of gluts, which at various times has sanctioned restrictions, extravagance, and waste. He showed that general over-production is impossible because everyone is always glad to exchange the commodities at his disposal if there exist sufficient of other commodities to make a bargain. Sometimes inconvenience is experienced when a particular commodity has been produced in excess through an error of judgment, or when the purchasing power of consumers has decreased through diminished production on their part. Complaints that scarcity of money is a cause of commercial dulness are merely expressions of shopkeepers' peevishness. If the proper commodities existed in sufficient abundance their exchange would be effected though one coin had to do the work of ten; and the sole cure of over-production is increased aggregate production. "Les échanges terminés, il se trouve toujours qu'on a payé des produits avec des produits."\* This was, indeed, the chief practical contribution of the new political economy to the groundwork of modern Europe; and it was the greatest, as it was the simplest, victory over the old order which science could have achieved.

\* Say : *Traité d'Economie Politique* (1814), I. 147.

## CHAPTER XI.

### POSITIVE THEORY IN INDUCTIVE SCIENCE.

“Although the invention of plausible hypotheses, independent of any connection with experimental observation, can be of very little use in the promotion of natural knowledge; yet the discovery of simple and uniform principles, by which a great number of apparently heterogeneous phenomena are reduced to coherent and universal laws, must ever be allowed to be of considerable importance towards the improvement of the human intellect.”

*Thomas Young.*

FROM the point of view of general history the growth of man's acquaintance with the physical conditions of his existence possesses a twofold significance. While it is the part of special histories to record the steps by which the different sciences have developed, and to indicate the particular methods which promise by past success to facilitate further advance, it is the business of general history to discern the logical and practical results which accrue to society from scientific progress, and to determine the speculative influence which consequent physical conceptions exert over men's beliefs. In the eighteenth century, science was chiefly notable because it encouraged men to trust in their own reason; in the nineteenth it has confirmed and rewarded this faith by yielding a knowledge of physical phenomena which has both totally changed the material conditions of civilised

life, and greatly modified the current conceptions of human existence. Hence the science of the period under review, falling between the two ages, issuing from the one and emerging into the other, was distinguished by few immediately practical results; and its influence on speculative beliefs hardly countervailed the dislike to vigorous thinking which circumstances attending the Revolution produced in the popular mind. On the other hand, science at this time first fully justified the hopes of earlier enthusiasts by laying the foundation of fact and theory on which was reared the structure of modern physical knowledge.

So long as empirical data are few and disconnected, science cannot be said to exist. It is only when facts are brought into relation with one another by hypotheses, which at least give coherence for a time to a considerable body of particulars, that knowledge rises above common experience or curious observation. But as facts accumulate and grow more intelligible, scientific conceptions lose their provisional and arbitrary character. They at last become expressions of natural laws. While they organise known facts into consistent schemes, they provide tests for new conclusions and clues for further research. Though existing only in idea, they are capable of furnishing deductions which invariably conform with observation; though subject to correction and amplification, they rapidly absorb every new discovery within their several provinces; though thus embracing ever-increasing quantities of data, they constantly tend towards greater simplification by realising William of Ockham's logical

law of parsimony—*entia præter necessitatem non multiplicanda*; though mere theories, they prove themselves to be as positive as sensible experience. In fact science becomes a system of positive theories which render particular phenomena intelligible, and the process of induction fruitful; and it was to this fundamental stage that much of physical knowledge attained when in other respects the groundwork of our age was formed.

The enunciation of the most complete example of positive theory belonged, it is true, to an earlier period; but its speculative influence and extended application were of greatest historical importance throughout last century and in the earlier years of the nineteenth. Not till more than fifty years after publication did Newton's great law secure general acceptance among students of science on the continent.\* Mathematicians were still persuading themselves by rigorous demonstrations that in molar physics, gravitation—varying directly as the masses, and inversely as the square of the distance,—was a more satisfactory formula than the Cartesian theory of vortices, when intelligent men began to feel the same confidence in their ability to comprehend the highest laws of matter as in a former generation they had felt it in their power to deal with spiritual questions after Descartes had offered them a starting point in his *Cogito, ergo sum*. It was, moreover, during the process of verifying the theory that the greatest advances were made in the most imposing branch of physical science. In their efforts to complete Newton's application of his law to the

\* Whewell: *History of the Inductive Sciences*, II. 198.



movements of the heavenly bodies, astronomers obtained a mastery of celestial physics which cast into insignificance the earlier empirical generalisations; and their triumphant course continued till the fabric of theoretical astronomy was handed over in an almost complete state to the observers of this century.

In one problem these labours gained wide respect for the new theory by yielding great practical benefit to the public. For a long time it had been well understood that the art of navigation was subject to formidable dangers and hindrances through want of means for accurately determining longitude; and many European governments had offered large rewards for the invention of sufficiently precise methods. One scheme, which promised to satisfy practical conditions if the necessary basis for calculation could be obtained, was to ascertain the difference between local time and that of some fixed station, and thence to reckon the difference of longitude between the two places. To do this it was necessary to employ very exact timekeepers; and not till 1765 did John Harrison receive a large reward from the British Government for having made the first marine chronometers, on the principle of compensation through the unequal contraction of two metals, which proved competent to fulfil the required conditions. A second method likewise compared local time with that of a fixed station, but it sought to discover the latter by observing the position of the moon with regard to one of the principal planets or stars. Now the invention of Hadley's reflecting quadrant in 1731

enabled seamen to make accurate observations from the deck of a vessel; but the process also required that the time of the fixed station, corresponding with the position of the moon, should be known. This datum could only be derived from accurate lunar tables. Since the sixteenth century astronomers had striven to forecast the precise movements of the moon, but the subject proved to be one of great complexity, which baffled all investigation till after Newton's discovery of the law of gravitation. Even then mathematicians had to extend their command of analysis, and solve the problem of three bodies, before they were able to advance beyond the point where the great master had left the question. Ultimately, through the labours of Euler, Clairaut, and d'Alembert, Mayer succeeded in constructing lunar tables which possessed so much accuracy that the Board of Longitude saw fit to adopt them for purposes of navigation. Rewards were granted to Euler and to Mayer's widow; the first nautical almanack was published in 1767; and since then, the lunar theory has proved to be the most trustworthy source of the mariner's knowledge of his longitude.

But more attractive of general attention was the command which the theory of gravitation was shown to have over the apparently irregular movements of comets. Not only were these phenomena usually regarded as portentous, but they had frustrated all efforts of Cartesian mathematicians to reconcile their movements with the doctrine of a plenum and vortices. It happened that Halley, who was the foremost astronomer to receive

Newton's theory, was also the first man to predict the return of a comet. Halley's prophecy was founded on his belief in the competency of gravitation to explain all the movements of the solar system, and on the cycle which, according to this presumption of regularity, comets recorded in the past seemed to describe, coupled with an allowance for the retarding influence exercised by the planet Jupiter. To bring the body in closer connection with the law of gravity it was necessary to calculate more exactly the effect of the perturbations produced by Jupiter and Saturn on its orbit, and to compare the conclusion with the actual result. This was done by Clairaut, who had the satisfaction of seeing the comet of 1759 reach its perihelion within the month assigned by him.

In one question the old school believed that they possessed the evidence of actual observation in their favour. The conclusion of one of Newton's most remarkable deductions was that the figure of the earth is an oblate spheroid; but measurements undertaken by the French astronomers had yielded the result, which was made agreeable to the Cartesian system, that the spheroid was prolate. The measurements, however, were not beyond doubt; and the French Academy procured that they should be repeated on a more elaborate scale. The general truth of Newton's calculation was then incontrovertibly established; and its further accuracy, together with its conformity with variations of the pendulum, was proved by later mathematical reasonings. Newton had accounted for the precession of the equinoxes by this fact,

and he had also pointed out that the attraction of the moon on the redundant matter at the equator must occasion a nutation, or slight gyratory movement, of the earth's axis. The latter inequality was necessarily small; but observation could not be exact until its existence was ascertained and its value determined. Bradley, therefore, made a most important contribution to physical astronomy and pure theory when in 1748 he showed that the inequality really does obtain, and consists in a certain elliptic movement which extends through periods of eighteen years and a half. In the following year d'Alembert computed what, according to the theory of gravity, the quantities of nutation and precession should be; and he found that they agreed with the results of observation. About the same time Euler referred the variation of the obliquity of the ecliptic to Jupiter's attraction of the earth.

At this point the new theory of physics may be regarded as generally accepted, though as late as 1740 the French Academy of Sciences divided a prize between a mathematician who attempted to account for the tides on the Cartesian hypothesis, and three others, who adopted the principle by which Newton had connected the tides with the attraction of the moon and the variations introduced by the sun as it acted in conjunction with, or in opposition to, this satellite. When in 1772 Maskelyne proposed testing by the deflection of a plumb line the attraction exerted by the mass of a hill, he certainly recommended the trial on the ground that it "would make the universal

gravitation of matter, as it were, palpable to every person, and fit to convince those who will yield their assent to nothing but downright experiment ; ” \* but as a matter of fact the celebrated Schehallion measurements, which were undertaken in consequence, and the following trials by the torsion balance, were chiefly interesting on account of the information they furnished concerning the density of the earth. Meanwhile continental mathematicians had become fully aware that Newton had exhausted the resources of the ancient geometry,—an admission which their English rivals unfortunately failed to concede,—and they had equipped themselves with the powers of the calculus which he and Leibnitz had bequeathed to them. Astronomical investigation now ceased to be an ordeal of the theory of gravity ; and verification of the principle was merged in the rapid progress of the science. When some discrepancy between calculation and fact occurred, it only attracted more attention to the solution of the problem when it was reached. Anomalies were invariably proved to be but apparent till at last they came to be taken as indications that a peculiarly refined illustration of theory was about to be discovered.

As the general tendency of Newton’s astronomical labours was to demonstrate the harmonious interdependence obtaining at present among the planetary bodies, so that of the speculations of the next epoch was to prove the stability of the solar system. Besides disturbances in the planetary motions which complete their cycles within moderate

\* Weld : *History of the Royal Society*, II., 78.

periods, there are minute and slow variations of the elements of the elliptic orbits which extend through ages and are distinguished as secular inequalities. It is necessary to compute the value of these inequalities for the sake of practical astronomy, but it is of more importance to determine their intrinsic nature, because if they be prolonged indefinitely in the same direction they must at last issue in a total derangement of the planetary system. During the last quarter of the eighteenth century this problem, or rather series of problems, engaged the attention of Laplace and Lagrange. By the joint efforts of these two illustrious geometers, the investigations of Euler in this quarter were carried forward till the latter reached the theorem which Sir John Herschel calls the *Magna Charta* of our system.\* In 1776 Lagrange showed that on the supposition that the planets move in ellipses, the elements of which continually vary in consequence of their mutual perturbations, the mean distances are not subject to any secular variations whatever, but are merely affected by a series of inequalities which compensate themselves in short periods.† In 1782 the same mathematician announced as the final result of his researches that the secular variations of the elements of the orbits are in all cases such as for ever assure the stability of the planetary system.‡ One apparent exception to these rules was formed by the irregular movements of Jupiter and Saturn.

\* *Outlines of Astronomy*, 8th ed., p. 459.

† Grant : *History of Physical Astronomy*, p. 52.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

Comparison of Ptolemy's observations with those of Hevelius and later astronomers showed that the mean motion of the two planets had alternately been retarded and accelerated. It was presumed, therefore, that these long inequalities were periodic; but this conclusion had received neither demonstration nor connection with the law of gravity till Laplace showed that the variations were due to the mutual attraction of the two planets as they came into conjunction at different points of their orbits, that they completed their cycles in periods of 929 years, and that the inferences thus obtained agreed with actual observation.

A similar conclusion was reached concerning a slow acceleration of the moon's mean motion, which practical astronomers knew to have existed from the time of the Chaldean observations. Laplace connected it with a decrease in the action of the sun on the moon through a secular variation in the earth's orbit, which tends to diminish slightly for many ages the power of solar attraction on the moon, when an opposite inequality will convert the acceleration into a retardation. Kant had, however, noticed that the tides must gradually retard the rotation of the earth, and thus slowly lengthen our day. The effect of this lengthening of our measure of time is to make the moon's motion to appear to be gradually accelerated; and recently, examination of Laplace's theory has shown that it only accounts for a part of the phenomenon, leaving the rest dependent on Kant's theory of the lengthening of the solar day. Kant also explained the fact that the moon rotates on its axis in the

same time that it revolves round the earth by supposing that the same attraction, which produces tides in the earth's seas, must have caused tides in the moon when it was in a fluid state till its rate of rotation was reduced to a tideless accord with its movement round the earth.\* The variation in the obliquity of the ecliptic was likewise shown by Lagrange to be confined within narrow limits by the restricted nature of the oscillations which mutual attraction produces on the planetary orbits:—a conclusion which, coupled with further researches of Laplace, removed all apprehension of any considerable change in the seasons on the earth.

As soon as the internal economy of our planetary system had satisfactorily been determined, its external relations were brought within the limits of discussion. As early as 1783 William Herschel, the initiator of a new phase of observation and the founder of sidereal astronomy, concluded from his consideration of the proper motions of the fixed stars that the solar system was travelling through space to a point in the constellation of Hercules. By constructing telescopes of very superior power, the same astronomer was enabled to detect the first of a large number of planets which modern observation has added to those known to the ancient world. But the most notable result of his persistent researches was the detection of orbital motions among the binary stars similar to those produced in the solar system by force of gravity. Having instituted a scrutiny of the double stars with a view

\* Cf. Tait : *Recent Advances in Physical Science*, p. 170; Abbott : *Memoir of Kant (Kant's Theory of Ethics)*, p. xv.



of obtaining a measure of the annual parallax, Herschel found that many of them described regulated movements which could not be confounded with parallaxic effects caused by the elliptical movement of the earth; and he was thus led to distinguish from double stars, which are merely juxtaposed in our plane of vision, those which appeared to be placed in real connection with one another. This presumptive evidence, that the law of gravity obtains in other systems than our own, was laid before the Royal Society in 1802; and it has been confirmed by subsequent observation.\*

Herschel's profound examination of the heavenly bodies also afforded support to a conjectural extension of the law of gravity to a more distant region of time as well as of space. Hitherto the nebulæ known to astronomers had not numbered 150. Herschel proved this class of phenomena to be large and varied. Among them he detected nebulosities which appeared to be homogeneous and irresolvable into stars; others which seemed to have central cores of different degrees of definiteness. Hence he was led to hazard the conjecture that these nebulæ were stages in the formation of stars, and that the celestial bodies were produced by the condensation of nebulous matter which was originally diffused through space. Now as early as 1755 Kant had applied such a hypothesis to explain the evolution of the solar system in its present form; and in 1796 a similar theory had been put forth by Laplace. The hypo-

\* Cf. Herschel: *Outlines of Astronomy*, pp. 613—620.

thesis postulated the existence of highly-diffused nebulous matter which rotated in the form of a spheroid, and, gradually condensing and cooling, threw off concentric rings till only the central portion remained to form our sun. The rings broke up and formed new spheroids which also condensed, revolved, and sometimes threw off rings of their own, thus forming the planets and their satellites. Kant thought that he could account for both condensation and rotation by the two elementary forces of attraction and repulsion,\* but Laplace supposed that condensation was the result of cooling, and postulated an original impulse of rotation. Both speculatists maintained that the harmonious disposition of our system pointed to a single genesis, and urged that the actual movements agreed with the particular process supposed. For some time the confirmation, which Herschel's researches afforded, was disregarded in the belief that, since more powerful telescopes resolved many nebulae into clusters of stars, only higher magnifying powers were required to deprive all nebulosities of their distinctive character. But more recently various facts were seen to coincide with the hypothesis, and to render it probable that the outstanding nebulae are really fragments of diffused matter in different phases of condensation. Later still, spectrum analysis has proved some of the nebulae to be of a gaseous nature, and the sun and planets to be made of the same materials. In fact, taking into account the necessarily conjectural character of any solution of such a question, it would seem that

\* Cf. Abbott : *ibid.*, p. xvi.

the cosmogony which dates gravity before the world, possesses in its favour a very large measure of that probability which, as Bishop Butler said, can determine "the question, even in matters of speculation."

Indirectly the pursuit of astronomical knowledge led to the cultivation of a branch of physics, the fundamental theory of which was only reached at the beginning of this century. Long before the real nature of light was satisfactorily ascertained, the need for better telescopes had urged men to careful study of optical phenomena; and certainty of observation had required some acquaintance with the character of the medium through which the existence, form, and position of the heavenly bodies are perceived. Researches after the latter kind of information had yielded empirical laws of atmospheric refraction, the truth that light travels with a certain velocity, and that the effect of aberration is thus produced. Indeed Roemer's inference from the eclipses of Jupiter's moons that light travels at the rate of 192,500 miles per second,\* and Bradley's verification thereof by discovering apparent movements of the stars in consequence, may be said to have formed the basis of modern speculation on the nature of light. The scientific construction of telescopes had, on the other hand, furnished a variety of data from which theory might advance to explain the nature and movements of the illuminating agent. It was, indeed, when he was engaged in grinding lenses that Newton made the experiments by which he dis-

\* The real speed is about 186,000 miles per second.

covered the composite character of white light, and the unequal refrangibility of the different rays which form it. His further researches did much to awaken purely scientific interest in the nature of light, though his own doctrine of corpuscular emission has not proved satisfactory; and it is remarkable that when Huyghens shortly afterwards announced without avail the true laws of double refraction in Iceland spar, the discovery was based on the theory which was to make optical science a positive study.

But till the beginning of this century the authority of Newton, and the ability with which he had reconciled his hypothesis with facts, deterred people from resorting to the more difficult assumptions of the undulatory theory. Then the necessary steps towards establishing what Huyghens and Hooke had only been able partially to formulate, were made by Thomas Young. In a paper written in 1799 on Sound and Light he pointed out as a particular defect in Newton's doctrine that it left wholly inexplicable "Why, of the same kind of rays in every circumstance precisely similar, some should always be reflected, and others transmitted."\* Two years later, in another dissertation, he declared that in unconscious imitation of Hooke a further consideration of the colours of thin plates had converted the prepossession, which he formerly entertained for the undulatory system of light, into a very strong conviction of its truth and efficiency:—a conviction which has since most strikingly been confirmed by an analysis of the colours of striated

\* *Works*, I., 79.

substances.\* Other phenomena of the same kind were afterwards included within the explanations afforded by an undulatory hypothesis. They all amounted to illustrations of the principle of interference, which Young found alike in the wave-motion of a supposed ether, and in the wave-motion of air, producing in the one case periodical colours and in the other periodical beats.† Differently coloured lights are caused by different rates of undulation in the ether, and if any series of light-waves fail to coincide in their undulations they extinguish one another at their points of collision. A succession of dark intervals is produced if the light be of only one colour, because when it quenches itself, no other rays remain to lighten darkness; but if the light be composed of more than one kind of ray, the self-extinction of one leaves the others to appear alone. In this case a succession of prismatic colours is produced by the serial destruction of the different kinds of rays as the interfering waves cancel one another. Thus, for example, when a beam of white light impinges on a soap-bubble, part of the light is at once reflected back, and part penetrates the film, reaches its interior surface, and is partially reflected therefrom. The waves of the two reflections, therefore, do not

\* *Ibid.*, I., 141. The dissertation referred to is the Bakerian lecture for 1801: but some months earlier Young had given the headings of his argument in a letter to Nicholson's *Journal* (see Peacock: *Life of Thomas Young*, p. 131).

† In acoustics Helmholtz restricts the term interference to the phenomena caused by two perfectly equal simple tones; and the term beats to those caused by two nearly equal simple tones.—*Sensations of Tone*, pp. 240—249.

pursue an identical course of undulation, but vary in coincidence and in compatibility according to the varying thickness of the film, the two surfaces of which initiate them. In some parts the longer waves destroy one another, in some parts the shorter, thus producing the varied hues of the bubble.\*

Young's crucial instance consisted in placing a wire or hair in a small cone of light, admitted through a pinhole into a dark room, and allowing its shadow to fall on a screen. Besides external fringes on each side of the shadow, there appear within it bands of colour, parallel with its edges, of which the central and brightest band is white. By intercepting the light on one side of the object Young found that the internal bands entirely disappeared; thus showing that they are caused by the rays of light passing on both sides of the object, which, bending round, interfere with one another. Regarded from our present point of view Young's first investigations appear to have proved that his assumption that light is a sensation caused by the vibration of an ethereal fluid, was at least a good working hypothesis. But unfortunately his experiments and reasonings were ignorantly and maliciously criticised by Brougham in the *Edinburgh Review*: the public cared so little to adjudicate on the merits of the controversy that only one copy of Young's able reply was sold; and the current scientific conceptions remained undisturbed till

\* The principle of interference among waves had been applied by Newton to explain extraordinary phenomena presented by tides which Halley had described.

many years later other witnesses gave evidence in favour of the theory.\*

The principle of interference was not successfully brought before the scientific world till Fresnel independently discovered it in 1815. In that year his first memoir on the subject was delivered to the French Institute, and soon afterwards he presented the doctrine of undulations in a form which admitted of mathematical treatment and tests. The interest thus evoked for the theory was for a short time, however, in danger of being cooled by Malus' recent discovery of the polarisation of light by reflection. When light is polarised it cannot be dealt with like ordinary light, but is transmissible only in one plane. This phenomenon had been found to result from Iceland spar by Huyghens; and Newton had apprehended that the peculiarity of the two beams, into which a ray was divided by the spar, was that they had, as it were, two sides, and moved in two separate planes.† On the assumption that light consisted of particles, this two-sidedness was ascribed to the fact that each atom possessed polar forces like a magnet, and hence was derived the modern term which ill-suits modern conceptions of the phenomenon. Now Malus showed that when light is reflected at certain angles, varying for different substances, it possesses a similar character, which would be in-

\* One consequence of the attack was that a publisher, who had offered Young £1,000 for the copyright of his *Lectures*, was obliged to request to be released from his bargain. Cf. Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, II. 204.

† Cf. Tyndall: *On Light*, p. 115, *et passim*.

comprehensible if the ethereal vibrations were longitudinal. Young himself, in a note to an article on a memoir of Laplace, written in 1809, confessed as soon as he heard of this fact that it presented "greater difficulties to the advocates of the undulatory theory, than any other facts with which he was acquainted.\* But in a letter to Arago in 1817, he suggested that, if the vibrations were transversal, polarisation might be explicable on the undulatory hypothesis. A similar idea occurred to Arago and Fresnel about the same time, when they observed that two rays of polarised light do not interfere with one another, or, in other words, vibrate in different planes. Thus the problem of polarisation was solved by developing the undulatory hypothesis another step. The theory did not demand a new assumption, as the corpuscular doctrine so frequently did; it merely necessitated a more ample conception of what was already granted. Hence it led directly to a fuller explanation of double refraction, by showing that certain crystals act as selective media to ordinary light, and only permit the transversal waves to pass in certain planes of vibration. Hence, too, it yielded data for most recondite calculations, and most striking verifications. However advancing knowledge may further modify its statement, it certainly affords the means of bringing a great body of phenomena within the scope of calculation, and thus fairly claims the rank of a positive theory of physics.

The mode in which sound is produced by a

\* *Works*, I., 233.



wave-like motion of the atmosphere, gave Young a clue to the nature of light-rays, and the fact, described by Chladni, that sound is transmitted through a block of Scotch fir more rapidly in the direction of the fibres than transversely to them, assisted him to conceive the process of double refraction;\* but it was only in this period that the true character of aërial vibrations was defined, and the fundamental theory of acoustics was completed. Newton had given a correct account of the kind of vibratory movement which affects the ear, but he had failed to reconcile its mathematical treatment with observation. He showed how the waves must be conceived to be alternate condensations and rarefactions, and that their speed must depend on the elasticity and density of the air; but his consequent calculations of the velocity with which sound travels through the atmosphere were vitiated by his omission to take into consideration the heat generated by the wave-motion itself. This defect was repaired by Laplace, who noticed that such rapid pulsations as those of sound-waves, must produce sufficient heat to increase the elasticity of the air, and consequently the velocity of undulation. He gave a rule for determining this additional quantity which made the velocity of sound one-sixth greater than Newton had supposed,—a result which agreed very closely with observation. This period was also remarkable for Chladni's contributions to the theory of musical tone and the study of the diverse vibratory phenomena which are embraced by the science of sound. Chladni

\* *Works*, I., 228.

has, indeed, been called the father of modern acoustics; and the distinction is sufficiently just, because at this time the development of the science did not so much need the guidance of some new fundamental principle, as careful investigation of the various conditions which determine different forms of audible vibration.

It was far otherwise with the study of heat. The nature of this agent was no less misunderstood than was that of light before the discoveries of Young and Fresnel; and the want of positive theory was equally unfavourable to the acquisition of empirical knowledge, and the advance of scientific conceptions of the universe. A like belief in the emission of a material substance served to connect observed facts, and in some instances, as in those of conduction and radiation, it served to do so satisfactorily. Indeed, when Black made his celebrated discovery that latent heat is communicated to a body when it is changed from a solid into a liquid, or from a liquid into an ærial form,—a fact which really contains a full illustration of the mechanical nature of heat,—the hypothetical existence of caloric was in no wise discredited, though the manner of its transmission and retention was rendered more mysterious. And when other facts were brought under notice, which clearly indicated that heat was a mode of motion, they did not succeed in overthrowing the traditional view till, in a later period, a series of researches established the dynamical theory of heat, and the intrinsic connection and unity of natural forces.

Yet even in earlier times some thinkers had

preferred to conceive of heat as movement rather than to postulate an occult fluid; and within the period under review this opinion received such experimental justification as to form a groundwork for its subsequent demonstration. In the last two years of the eighteenth century both Rumford and Davy independently proved that heat is not material. The experiments of the latter consisted in melting ice by friction; but he did not assert that heat was motion till several years after he had made his experiments. Rumford, on the other hand, predisposed to regard the subject very seriously by his investigations into the economy of heating and lighting arrangements, instituted a careful examination of the circumstances attending the generation of heat during the process of boring cannon. He showed that the elevation of temperature was entirely produced through expenditure of energy, by an experimental application of friction produced by horse-power to heat bodies of metal and water, and by proofs that nothing had been lost in weight, or in capacity for absorbing or producing heat, by the substances which by their motion had supplied high degrees of warmth. "What is Heat?" he asked. "Is there any such thing as an igneous fluid? Is there any such thing that can with propriety be called caloric?"\* He then argued "that anything which any insulated body, or system of bodies, can continue to furnish without limitation, cannot possibly be a material substance;" that it is "extremely difficult if not

\* *An Inquiry into the source of heat which is excited by Friction; Essays* (1800), II., 491.

quite impossible, to form any distinct idea of anything capable of being excited and communicated in the manner the Heat was excited and communicated in these experiments, except it be Motion." \* Rumford also endeavoured to estimate the quantitative relation between heat produced by friction, and heat produced by combustion; he spoke of the power of animals as being due to their food which might thus be caused to supply heat mechanically or by being used as fuel; and he pointed out that heat could be produced by mechanical action of various kinds. Hence he was, in truth, the first of a line of workers who were to demonstrate in another generation the correlation and conservation of forces.†

In themselves both the demonstrations of Rumford and Davy were virtually complete, but neither were presented without logical error. Perhaps, it was on this account that they failed to convert the scientific world; but the failure is the more curious because soon afterwards the analogy between light and heat received illustration; and as the undulatory nature of the first became evident the theory of the second ought to have received similar revision. Herschel observed that the hottest rays of the solar spectrum lay beyond the red without

\* *Essays*, II., 493.

† This is the view naturally taken in the United States, of which Rumford was born a citizen, though he won his title in the Bavarian service, and spent the rest of his life in England and France (See Ellis: *Life of Count Rumford*, p. 482, *et passim*). Lately in this country Professor Tait has shown in a chapter on the early history of energy that Rumford's claims to distinction are very considerable.

being visible, showing that heat-rays are emitted like light though incapable of exciting visual sensation. Ritter discovered the ultra-violet rays, showing that at the other end of the spectrum the analogy was carried out in waves which are capable only of chemical action, as those at the red end are capable only of thermal effect. Young, of course, in his *Lectures on Natural Philosophy*, readily connected these facts with his own undulatory doctrine of light and Rumford's dynamical theory of heat.\* In 1817 Berard declared that he found heat to be subject to the very same peculiar treatment which afforded the most refined evidence in behalf of the new system of light, namely, to polarisation; though his assertion was not confirmed by other experimenters† for many years, when better means of thermotic research clearly proved non-luminous heat to be polarised by tourmaline. Capacity for refraction was also found to belong to the rays of heat. Nevertheless the traditional opinion was so firmly established that in 1837, Whewell, who records these latter facts with a full sense of their significance, and was himself a staunch upholder of the new theory of light, treated Rumford's experiments with disregard, and shrank from affirming more than that the undulatory hypothesis of heat was on its trial, to be confirmed or modified by future discoveries.‡

Up to a certain point the persistence of the

\* Peacock : *loc. cit.*, p. 197.

† Cf. Baden Powell's *Report on Radiant Heat, British Association Reports*, 1832, p. 262.

‡ *History of the Inductive Sciences*, II., 529.

belief in a hypothetical caloric was paralleled by the obstinacy of a cardinal assumption of the older chemists. For a long time phlogiston was conceived to be the principle of combustion, as caloric was imagined to be that of heat: its expulsion was supposed to be the occasion of fire as that of caloric was supposed to be the occasion of elevated temperature; and so closely was its assumed existence connected with the state of chemical knowledge of the day that its systematic determination by Stahl is rightly considered to have been of great service in aiding the collocation of discrete facts. But the authority of this principle was not so lasting as that of its physical analogue. Its retention was inconsistent with true scientific progress; and its repudiation was the first of the steps which made chemistry modern. The cause of this change was the institution of pneumatic chemistry by Black, Priestley, Cavendish, and Scheele, though all these investigators believed implicitly in the phlogistic theory. Black initiated the study of gases by employing the balances to prove that the caustic properties of lime and similar substances were due to the expulsion of carbonic acid, which he called fixed air on account of its retention by the original substance. Cavendish next discovered the properties of hydrogen; and soon afterwards, in 1774, Priestley disengaged oxygen from mercuric oxide, and described its peculiarities, calling it dephlogisticated air, because he imagined that its great power to support combustion was due to its want of phlogiston and consequent ability to elicit the principle from other substances. Scheele

also discovered oxygen in the following year; and several years later Cavendish demonstrated the important functions of gases by showing that from a mixture of oxygen and hydrogen water is produced by ignition.

To the discoverers themselves the bearing of these pneumatic phenomena on the theory of combustion, was not apparent, and, indeed, hydrogen was for a time in danger of being identified with phlogiston. It required another worker to prove that the new discoveries could not be reconciled with the old doctrine. From the fact that combustible substances when burnt, and metals when calcined, gain in weight, Lavoisier had already concluded that combustion and calcination are not caused by the emission of phlogiston, but are accompanied by the absorption of a quantity of air, when the discovery of oxygen brought to light the main agent concerned in the process. The earlier advocates of phlogiston had, however, provided an answer to Lavoisier's argument, by asserting that their element was also the principle of levity; and the frequent presence of hydrogen furnished the later members of the school with objections against the exclusion of phlogiston, till it was shown that the gas was produced by the decomposition of water.\* From this moment the old hypothesis was irretrievably discredited. Lavoisier proceeded to show convincingly that the phlogistic doctrine was superfluous and confusing; he proved that it was rather oxygen, the so-called dephlogisticated air, which invariably accompanied combustion by unit-

\* Cf. Thomson : *History of Chemistry*, II., 95, *et seq.*

ing with the burning bodies; he endeavoured to identify the same element as the principle of acidity; and he finally committed to oblivion the old system and its grotesque terminology, by helping to construct and introduce the groundwork of modern chemical nomenclature.

The revolution in chemistry was as English in inception, as French in consummation, and as European in extent, as the revolution in politics. It was also nearly as provocative of conflict between Frenchmen and their neighbours. Of the discoverers who gave it origin, Black alone lived to acquiesce in the repudiation of phlogiston, while Priestley to his last moments continued to combat in its behalf. In the controversy which attended its propagation, Lavoisier was aided by Fourcroy, Monge, Morveau, and Berthollet; the new doctrines were styled the French system, and their acceptance was enforced by a vigorous onslaught on the chemists of other countries. The book of one able defender of the old theory, that of the English Kirwan, was even translated into French, and refuted in sections by Lavoisier and his associates. But the advocates of the old opinions were in no position to retard seriously the victory of truth. Kirwan himself candidly admitted that he was overcome; and with a new generation of chemists, the Lavoisierian doctrine became the universally accepted system. It remained for Davy to correct the exaggerated opinion which the anti-phlogistic school had formed of the functions of oxygen. This chemist showed that combustion does not depend upon the action of a single sub-



stance like oxygen, but is a general result produced by intensely violent motion of the atoms of any bodies which possess sufficiently strong chemical and electrical relations.\* By his discovery that chlorine is a simple substance he conclusively refuted the theory that oxygen is also the exclusive principle of acidity,†—a correction which Berthollet maintained on the ground of his experiments on sulphuretted hydrogen and prussic acid.‡ Indeed the history of synthetic chemistry at this critical period is to be read in the names given to chlorine at different junctures. Scheele's original name—dephlogisticated muriatic acid—records the sway of Stahl's system; the French name—oxymuriatic acid—indicates the supremacy of oxygen; while Davy's title, derived from the colour of its gas, asserts that the substance is an independent element, capable though it is to support combustion and form acid matter, which could not be brought within Lavoisier's generalisation, even by the power of electrolysis.

Meanwhile analytical inquiry had rapidly advanced. Owing to the labours of Bergman and Scheele, of Klaproth and Vauquelin, to the platinum crucible of Wollaston, and the blowpipe of the Swedes, above all, to the attention attracted to the indestructibility of matter, and the importance conferred on the use of the balance by Lavoisier's innovations, chemical analysis had reached a relatively high state of precision, and had accumu-

\* Cf. Paris : *Life of Davy*, I., 363.

† Cf. *Memoir, Works*, I., 122. Ed. by John Davy.

‡ Thomson : *loc. cit.* II., 156.

lated a large quantity of experimental results. But no theory of chemical combination invested these data with quantitative exactness, and regulated the relative quantities of the constituents necessary to produce a definite effect. Bergman had called attention to the different elective affinities of different substances, and two or three chemists of little influence had suggested that the affinities obtained between definite proportions of the elements; but current opinion on the subject was so unsettled, that a man like Berthollet could deliberately affirm that bodies were capable of uniting with each other in all possible proportions. The work of showing that chemical synthesis takes place according to a fundamental law of quantitative relation, was only performed by Dalton in the first decade of this century. This inquirer proved that bodies always combine in certain definite proportions, that each element has a constant weight of its own, and, therefore, that it always combines in multiple proportions of this weight. Gay-Lussac also found that gases combine in multiple proportions of volume.\* Shortly afterwards Avogadro concluded, from the equal changes of volume produced by variation of temperature and pressure, that equal volumes of gas contain the same number of atoms. Dalton's own statement of his theory was entirely founded on the conception of primary atomic weights, the relation of which could be expressed numerically; but whatever view was taken of the metaphysical aspect of primary indivisible

\* Cf. Angus Smith: *Memoir of John Dalton, and History of the Atomic Theory*. Kopp: *Entwicklung der Chemie*, 246-342.

atoms of different weights, his principle of multiple proportions introduced into the science a clearness of conception, which was of incalculable importance in enabling chemists to deal with the vast quantity of data yielded by modern laboratories; and it originated a system of notation which has become indispensable to scientific intercourse.

Having extended itself to the borders of molecular physics, chemistry was overtaken by another science, and doubly connected with the rest of the scheme of human knowledge. During the eighteenth century the study of electrical phenomena had been prosecuted with great diligence and success. All the elementary facts of frictional electricity had been ascertained; and considerable progress had been made in subjecting them to mathematical treatment. The invention of the Leyden jar had given the means of accumulating considerable quantities of electrical force, and Franklin's kite had identified its discharges with the lightning of the heavens. At the end of this period a new source of the power was discovered by Galvani and Volta. The former found that not only was the leg of a dead frog convulsed when approached by an electric current, but that the movement might be occasioned by causing the crural nerve and muscle to complete a circuit between two metals, or even by suitably bringing into contact the nerve and muscle alone. The physiologist naturally sought to account for the phenomena by the hypothesis of animal electricity: Volta, the physicist, resolutely disengaged the animal element from all the phenomena in which

metals were present, and showed that a kind of electricity could be produced by two metals connected together by a moist medium. It was the consequent invention of the voltaic pile which enabled chemists to claim electric force as a part of their province.

In 1800 Nicholson and Carlisle discovered that the energy of the pile could decompose water into its chemical constituents. Other experimenters soon extended this power of electricity over other substances; and Davy made it his special business to identify the action of the galvanic battery with chemical action. At the outset of his career, as is shown by a letter to a friend, he thought that he had found by numerous experiments that galvanism was "a process purely chemical;"\* but it was not till 1806 that he was able to present a complete statement of his opinions. In his famous Bakerian lecture for this year he first removed the prevalent misconception that the voltaic current produced of itself chemical elements, by showing that they were always due to the action of electricity on impurities in the water or on the substance of the vessels containing the water. He thus proved that the chemical power of electricity was confined to separating combined substances; and then by a number of well-contrived experiments he demonstrated that in the process of

\* Paris: *Life of Davy*, 1., 110. Though at first it was known that electricity was excited by the mere contact of metals, as has quite recently again been demonstrated, further observation had induced a supposition that the generation of a current was always accompanied by chemical changes. Hence Davy's comprehensive assertion.

electrical decomposition "hydrogen, the alkaline substances, the metals and certain metallic oxides, are attracted by negatively electrified metallic surfaces, and repelled by positively electrified metallic surfaces; and contrariwise, that oxygen and acid substances are attracted by positively electrified metallic surfaces, and repelled by negatively electrified metallic surfaces; and these attractive and repulsive forces are sufficiently energetic to destroy or suspend the usual operation of elective affinity."\* Hence he concluded that "amongst the substances that combine chemically, all those, the electrical energies of which are well known, exhibit opposite states;" and he asks whether from this relation of electrical energy to chemical affinity it may not be supposed that they are identical and "an essential property of matter."† Twenty years afterwards, in a paper "On the Relations of Electrical and Chemical Changes," Davy referred to this lecture as embodying speculations which a layman, at least, cannot find therein. He then declared that he had drawn the conclusion that "the combinations and decompositions by electricity were referable to the law of electrical attractions and repulsions," and advanced the hypothesis that "chemical and electrical attractions were produced by the same cause, acting in one case on particles, in the other on masses;" and that "the same property, under different modifi-

\* *Works*, v. 28. In the following year he illustrated the last remark by analysing the so-called fixed alkalies, potash and soda, into oxygen and the metallic bases, potassium and sodium.

† *Ibid.*, p. 39.

cations, was the cause of all the phenomena exhibited by different voltaic combinations." \* In the interval, it is true that the original memoir had served as the basis of such a theory, but its statements were so vague that it had not prevented the formation of several others; and Davy's interpretation of it can only be understood when his motive for making the retrospect is taken into account. The fact was that his experimental results had in great measure been anticipated by Berzelius and Hisinger, and that the branch of chemistry, of which his lecture helped to lay the foundation, had meanwhile obtained greater speculative importance, and induced a hope, as he said, that "many of the corpuscular changes, now obscure, will ultimately be found to depend upon the same causes and to be governed by the same laws."

In those branches of physical research which so far have come under review, the construction of positive theory proceeds on the sure grounds of observation, experiment, and verifiable calculation. But in other departments of inductive science, which possess equal claims to be founded on sound generalisations, experiments are rarely obtainable, the scope of observation is restricted, and mathematical calculation is almost inapplicable. Such sciences are those which deal with the constitution of our globe and the laws of organic life. These studies, moreover, appeared to be more closely concerned with man's own nature and position than any others of a physical character;

\* *Works*, vi. 311.

and accordingly they furnished a greater than common proportion of visionary hypotheses to retard the development of practicable theory. In the eighteenth century geology suffered especial disadvantage from these circumstances. Though many observers, of whom the greater number were Italians, ably endeavoured to explain several of the phenomena of the earth's crust by known causes, every comprehensive scheme of geological history became entangled in the miraculous, as soon as the supposed periods of the creation and deluge were reached. Geology, indeed, was so much subjected to the control of natural theologians that it was regarded rather as an illustration in orthodox cosmogonies than as a subject for serious scientific investigation. Its abasement seemed the more assured because men refused to connect it with the pursuit of utility, and sanctioned the more readily its exclusive employment by theologians because they supposed it to be an entirely speculative study, and therefore the lawful property of those to whose speculative interests it could best be adapted. ✓ l

This attitude of indifference was only disturbed as the practical importance of mineralogy became better understood, and its connection with geology received demonstration. In fact, if the founding of modern geology be defined as the work of first exciting the interest of the European public in the study of geological formations, the father of the science must be reputed to have been a professor in the School of Mines at Freiburg. It was, indeed, the success of Werner in presenting the structure of the earth's crust as a subject of paramount

practical importance that enlisted the first large body of students in geological investigation; and it was his personal charm and enthusiasm which induced his pupils to regard their study as a sublime science. Werner established his school during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when the tender age of geology permitted the reproduction from earlier times of a master's power over the minds of his followers. Yet his own contribution to positive geological theory was commensurate neither with his extraordinary perception of mineralogical details, nor with his love of discursive views. He was, however, at least, instrumental in giving a wide circulation to the fact, well known to many earlier geologists, that the strata of the earth's crust have certain constant relations to one another in order of superposition over the primary unstratified rock; and according to some testimony, he taught his pupils to discriminate the different formations by the fossils they contain, and to perceive that the more recent the formation, the nearer the fossil remains approach the beings of the present world.\*

On the other hand Werner's etiological speculations and assumptions seriously impaired the progress of scientific opinion. Contending that the igneous rocks were aqueous precipitates, postulating at his pleasure the operation of unknown causes, and suspending when convenient the existence of present conditions, he led his disciples to deny the obvious inferences of more sagacious

\* Cf. Marsh: *History and Methods of Palaeontological Discovery*, p. 19. Lyell: *Principles of Geology*, I., 71, *et passim*.



observers. But while he was thus depraving the imaginations of his pupils, a Scottish geologist was quietly working out a rigorous method of observation, deduction, and comparison. Hutton discarded alike speculation on the origin of things and conjectures about obsolete causes. "Nunc naturalem causam quærimus et assiduam, non raram et fortuitam," was the maxim which guided his investigations.\* Assuming only the operation of existing forces, he applied them to explain the structures discovered by investigation; and having ascended through particulars to his conclusions, he descended again and verified them by comparison with more extended observations. He thus arrived at a theory of the earth which, though imperfectly developed by himself, provided a positive basis for geological science. His severe exclusion of hypothetical causes led him to assign immense periods of time to the different processes of formation: warranted by the chemical experiments of Sir James Hall, he applied the principle of pressure to modify the effects of heat on the rocks which had been fused beneath the sea: constant to his belief that we have neither evidence of a beginning nor prospect of an end, he maintained that no order of rocks betrayed a genuinely primitive character. Even the granite of the mountains he determined to be of a derivative nature. To him, at any rate, the cycle of formation and decay—the constant decomposition by mechanical and chemical causes, the accumulation of waste into strata beneath the seas, their fusion into solid masses by heat when

\* Playfair : *Works*, I. 138.

not permitted to retain their sedimentary character, their elevations and distortions by volcanic force,—presented no element of absolute inception.

While, therefore, the school of Werner was desperately contending with a rival party concerning the origin of basalt and other traprocks, Hutton appropriated what truth Neptunists and Vulcanists held between them, and gave the main conditions of geological problems a new statement which could not fail to recommend itself as the study came to be treated in a more scientific spirit. To ensure the cessation of factious controversy it was seen to be necessary to drop for a time the quest for a supreme theory, and to collect true investigators around the less contentious, but equally necessary, work of gathering elementary data. An instructive example of what was to be achieved in this direction was afforded by William Smith in his survey of the British rocks, by which he not only classified the formations of this island, but arrived independently at the law of relation between strata, and at the truth that each contains peculiar fossils which more nearly resemble present life as they belong to more recent beds. The founders of the Geological Society of London in 1807 were actuated not by zeal for the construction of theories but by the interest which was aroused by the new French views on crystallography; \*

\* These views, though hardly presenting a case of positive theory, formed the basis of the modern science. Romé Delisle showed in 1783 that the angle of inclination of the faces of primitive crystalline forms remains constant in the same species of mineral; and he explained the fact that the same mineral assumes various secondary crystalline forms by supposing that

and they agreed in confessing that for some time to come co-operation should be directed towards the accumulation of facts in the narrowest sense. Meanwhile Hutton's principles awaited further development and application at the hands of the next great geological thinker. His doctrines had been widely advertised by the exposition of Playfair; they only needed to be corrected and extended by one who was in possession of all attainable facts. Their general reception, however, depended on the abandonment of traditional prejudices respecting the age of the world. As long as men preferred

they are derived from the single primitive form being cut in different manners. Bergman noticed how the planes of cleavage throw light on the building up of minerals from simple crystalline forms. Haüy, however, methodically reduced the structure of crystals to compounds of primitive forms. The secondary forms he believed to be produced by aggregation of primitive molecules about a nucleus in planes parallel to its faces; and their variation in the same species he supposed to be due to decrease in the extent of the laminæ thus formed by subtraction of one or more series of integral molecules. The shape of the primitive forms he determined by calculation from the phenomena of cleavage and angular incidence; and hence he claimed that his theory could discriminate between possible and impossible forms of the same substance. At any rate he successfully proved that crystalline formation takes place according to law, and consequently that geometrical form may be a test of the nature of substances:—a conclusion which Haüy illustrated by forecasting, from his observation of a difference in the angles of specimens supposed to be the same mineral, the discovery of Vauquelin by chemical analysis, that in one case baryta was present, and in the other strontia. The study of cleavages and angles was greatly facilitated by Wollaston's reflecting goniometer; but soon the importance of the axes of crystals was insisted upon by Weiss and Mohs, and crystallography became less associated with molecular hypotheses and more connected with optical science.

to invoke the intervention of catastrophes rather than rely on the protracted operation of known causes, geological theory could not but be more imaginary than positive. Such a preference was entertained with inconceivable tenacity in various quarters till a very recent date; but so far as the development of the science was affected it did not long survive the publication of Lyell's great work in 1830. The chief cause which prepared for the surrender of the old cosmogonies likewise dates from the period under review; and it furnished irresistible evidence not only in behalf of positive geological theory, but in behalf of reasoned biological doctrine.

One of the great merits of Smith, and in a less degree one of Werner's, as has been noted, was to exhibit the manner in which fossils are characteristic of the strata they occupy, and how by their means the relative ages of different beds may be determined. Fossils being granted to be really remains of past life on the earth, it followed that the series of strata must have been laid down during lapses of time sufficient to permit the growth of a succession of organic forms. Now even in matters of geology the nineteenth century was not prepared to follow the sixteenth, and assume imaginary causes to account for the presence of fossils; and gradually it was admitted that organic remains implied the efflux of considerable periods of time during the stratification of the earth's crust. "It is abundantly obvious," Cuvier affirmed in the most popular work on geology of the time, "that it is to these fossil remains alone that

we owe even the commencement of a theory of the earth, and that without them, we should perhaps never have even suspected that there existed any successive epochs, and a series of different operations, in the formation of the globe.” “The application of botanical and zoological evidence,” wrote Humboldt in 1844, “to determine the relative age of rocks—this chronometry of the earth’s surface which was already present to the lofty mind of Hooke—indicates one of the most glorious epochs of modern geognosy, which has finally, on the continent at least, been emancipated from the sway of Semitic doctrines.”\* But how immeasurable were these periods could only be demonstrated as the circumstances attending the generation of a series of organic forms were better understood. Hence it was a coincidence of no small moment that about this time the higher problems of biology engaged the attention of the great French naturalists; and that at the same time the discovery of a large quantity of fossils in the Paris basin brought into prominence the palæontological aspect of the problem of species.†

The theory of evolution has been placed only in our own time on a positive basis, and it is impossible

\* *Theory of the Earth*, 5th Eng. Edit., p. 51. *Cosmos*, Otte’s translation, I. 272.

† Cf. Lyell, I. 87. At this time Cuvier could justly say:—“Tant de travaux et des résultats si heureux dans la partie philosophique de la zoologie autorisent bien à dire qu’elle est en quelque sorte aujourd’hui une science française. Appliquées un jour à toutes les espèces dans un ouvrage général, nos méthodes obtiendront bientôt une influence universelle. *Histoire des Sciences Naturelles depuis 1789*, I., 300.

to claim an equal rank for the suggestions of earlier inquiries. Yet it has already appeared that the formation of the solar system from an original vapour, and the development of the earth's crust by continuous change, were maintained with considerable force during the period under review. It was likewise with evolution in biology. The speculations of Geoffroy St. Hilaire, Lamarck, Goethe, and von Baer, constituted an intermediate stage in the train of thought, which surely conducted men from the study of comparative anatomy to our present views of the phenomena of Life. Like the dynamical theory of heat, the doctrine of evolution in biology, though adumbrated by previous thinkers, now received its first reasoned statement, to be in another generation extended and verified by inductive research till it yielded positive laws of the highest order.

In botany the natural system of classification of the two Jussieus had already introduced the idea of close relationship among species when Goethe pointed out with success, as C. Wolff had done thirty years before in vain, that the structure of plants was explicable as a metamorphosis and repetition of a single original form—the leaf around an axis. In the first decade of this century Lamarck, whose special study of invertebrates was certainly less suggestive than that of vertebrates, perceived a like resemblance among animal organisms, and maintained that all species of living bodies are descended from a few simpler forms. Dwelling upon the slight gradations which separate the members in the scale of organic life, and the results

produced by artificial selection, he accounted for the variations now obtaining in nature by the influence of different foods and climates, and the effects of persistent exercise, operating through many generations of hereditary transmission. St. Hilaire declared that living beings were constructed after one plan, and that their different organs were not designed for their special needs, but were merely modifications of an original type. He remarked that some parts occurred in all animals, though greatly differing in their mode of development: he further noticed that these parts always exist in the same relation to one another; and he interpreted the presence of superfluous organs as rudimentary survivals of what had been useful to pre-existing species. With Goethe he entertained the belief that the superior development of one part or organ is compensated by inferior development of other parts. And Goethe, not content with throwing out formative ideas, confirmed the doctrine of homology, by discovering that the intermaxillary bone of the lower animals exists in a rudimentary form in man; and he drew attention to serial homologies, or comparisons of different parts or organs in the same individual, by showing that the skull of vertebrates is only a development of a certain number of vertebræ.\* To the study

\* Writing to Knebel in 1784, when his essay on the intermaxillary bone was composed, though it was not published till thirty years later, Goethe said:—"I have refrained from indicating the logical outcome of the discovery,—it is a truth which Herder has already printed in his *Ideen*, viz., that the distinctness of man from the brute is not to be looked for in any single point of difference. . . . Every creature is a note, a shade, in a great

of homologies, thus initiated, Goethe gave the name of morphology, which has now come to denote that wider department of natural history which Darwin has called "its very soul."\* The tendency of morphology to trace species to a common origin was strengthened by comparative embryology in the hands of von Baer, who later in the century showed that up to certain stages of their development the special forms of the most diverse animals are concealed in a general resemblance, that the process of differentiation starts from points indistinguishable from phases in the life of lower organisms, and, by his discovery of the ovarian ovum of mammals, that the origin of these animals is similar to that of others lower in the scale. Meanwhile Bichat had opened the way for the refinements of the cell-theory by analysing the animal organism into a series of simple tissues possessing definite structural characters.

Yet the hypothesis of special creations remained unshaken by the theory of derivative species. Resistance in its behalf was advanced from all quarters; and from none so effectually as from the naturalist who did most to supply facts for the ultimate establishment of the doctrine of evolution.

harmony, and the study which apprehends this harmony as a whole, and in its vastness is alone fruitful; each isolated thing, otherwise taken, is a meaningless letter." (Düntzer: *Life of Goethe*, translated by Pinkerton, i. 428.) Goethe was equally advanced in his opinions on geology, which he had been led to study by his official duties at the mines. His scientific reputation, however, greatly suffered from his mistaken theory of optics.

\* *Origin of Species*, 6th ed., 382.



The wide and profound investigations of Cuvier introduced a new classification of the animal kingdom, founded on resemblances of morphological type and homology. While, therefore, he brought comparative anatomy to its present position of arbitrator in zoological classification, he concentrated attention on the correlations which St. Hilaire interpreted as indications of common descent. But so impressed was he by the apparent organisation of animal structures towards a final cause, that he would not abandon the traditional belief that species were created with the particular purpose of fitting them for their conditions of life. In his consequent controversy with St. Hilaire, the state of science at that time enabled him to claim victory; his theory of types became generally accepted; and zoological research continued to be mainly empirical. Yet it was an overpowering conception of finality, guided by an extensive acquaintance with existing animal forms, which enabled him to reconstruct, with remarkable success, the animals of which only fragments remained. Convinced that every organised being forms a complete system within itself, exactly adapted to a certain habit of life, he deduced from the most slender data the structure which an animal must have possessed in order to conserve itself under the conditions and limitations indicated by the evidence at command. Hence, by employing the method of Zadig, he was able to discern the nature of the fossil remains exhumed near Paris, and to bring them into comparison with the structures of living beings. Hitherto marine fossils had not supplied

positive evidence that in past times species existed which do not live at the present day, for it was impossible to say certainly that the like did not inhabit some remote parts of the ocean. But Cuvier had the remains of large land and river animals to deal with; and from them he proved, with the assistance of Brongniart, that a series of extinct beings had once inhabited the globe during a succession of geological periods, and that these creatures bore evident morphological resemblance to one another and to animals of the present day. Thus, though he himself remained confident that lacunæ in the sequence of organic development manifested the intervention of special creations, though he would affirm that none of the agents which nature now employs would have been sufficient for the production of her ancient works,\* he virtually created the science of palæontology which, as Professor Huxley has said, would in our own generation have been obliged to invent the doctrine of evolution if it had not already existed.†

\* *Theory of the Earth*, p. 24.

† *Science and Culture, and other Essays*, p. 322.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND SENSATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY.

"Personal interests and feelings, in the social state, can only obtain the maximum of satisfaction by means of co-operation, and the necessary condition of co-operation is a common belief. All human society, consequently, is grounded on a system of fundamental opinions, which only the speculative faculty can provide, and which, when provided, directs our other impulses in their mode of seeking their gratification. And hence the history of opinions, and of the speculative faculty, has always been the leading element in the history of mankind."—*J. S. Mill.*

WHILE the advance of inductive science towards a system of positive theory is calculated to expand men's views of speculative problems, it is equally serviceable in setting forth the line of demarcation which separates the province of physical knowledge from the domain of metaphysics. As they become more complete, the explanations of science repose more directly on space and time of indefinite extent, they tend to divide matter more and more minutely, and they more successfully reduce phenomena to simple expressions of force; yet it is the essential nature of these means of explanation that they are in themselves inexplicable by science. Space and time could not be extended indefinitely if their quantities could be scientifically determined; and if their quantities could be determined they would no longer be the time and space with which science

deals, for these exclude the conception of limit. In like manner the divisibility of matter would cease if an ultimate atom were reached; but this atom, though serviceable as a mathematical fiction, would not be the matter of science, for if it possessed extension it would be liable to further division, and if it did not possess extension no aggregate of such atoms could form extended substance. Matter, too, common consciousness must think of as coloured; but science shows that colour itself is an effect of matter, and not one of its essentials. Force, on the other hand, is now necessarily conceived to be a constant quantity throughout its various forms, but analysis reduces it to terms of matter, space, and time, and leaves it either non-existent or a function of three self-contradictory conceptions. Organised life, again, is seen to elude more and more hopelessly the reach of merely mechanical conceptions as the difference between selective aggregation in the growth of crystals, and the evolution of species and intelligence in the animal world, is rendered more apparent. More important still, the relation of cause and effect, the fundamental principle of all scientific investigation, is found on examination to be merely a mental prejudice if the evidence of sense alone is admitted; while if testimony from other quarters be permitted to invest the nexus with intrinsic reality, the truths of science are made contingent on a first cause, or are swallowed up in the mysteries of infinite regression.

Now it is the part of philosophy to consider the numerous problems which are thus left outstanding

by the methods of science; but the history of philosophy has for the most part remained independent of the history of science. Such is the nature of the human mind that, till very recently in the development of the race, men have felt far more concern about the ultimate nature of things than about the phenomenal laws of common experience. Thus philosophical and religious thought have hitherto held a position of great individual importance. During the eighteenth century, though the progress of science most immediately influenced current opinions, philosophy still pursued a course of its own, and continued to carry on the discussion which those, who devote attention to the highest problems of existence, render sooner or later of effect in the march of civilisation. One aspect of its development, it is true, was connected with the views which obtained support from material science; but this was only a one-sided application of Locke's doctrines, while philosophy itself was following the impulses which Locke and Descartes together had communicated to it. The main problem of philosophy was then, as it had been since the downfall of scholasticism, to determine the conditions and worth of experience. All speculative questions were seen to centre in the inquiry, How is knowledge possible? how can there be any commerce between two such heterogeneous existences as mind and matter? how can we have any confidence in the result of such commerce? what, in short, is the relation between subject and object?\*

\* The following pages are partially derived from my *Introduction to the Critical Philosophy of Kant*.

Now Locke had supposed that the mind was primarily a blank, a *tabula rasa*, on which matter acted through the senses. Further, he presumed that the mind could work up the impressions thus obtained into a stock of ideas. All ideas, therefore, however irreducible they might at first appear, were traceable to sensible impressions. The impressing matter was identified with the primary qualities, viz., extension and resistance; while temperature, etc., as secondary qualities, were supposed to be but modes of the affection of this matter. Thus all our knowledge resulted from sensation, itself the affection of matter on our minds. Berkeley, therefore, inquired what matter is, and how it serves as the *præsumptum* of sensations. Refusing to make the illegitimate assumption of an independent spatial world, with minds and matter moving about in it, he demanded the reduction of Locke's doctrines to their lowest terms. Propounding for the first time that theory of vision which, with some additions, is now generally accepted, he converted our perceptions of an external world into sensations and inferences derived therefrom. By thus doing, he rendered the objective element in Locke's theory needless and, in fact, contradictory. Unless philosophy shifted its position, order and objectivity would have to be derived from subjective sensations, and the individual would become the measure of the universe. The truth of our experience from this point of view could only be determined by discovering the cause of the individual's sensations, and the secret of their cohesion into a world. As is well known, Berkeley

filled up the void to his own satisfaction by the introduction of the Great Spirit, and deftly replaced the matter he dreaded by the God he served. This hypothesis was, of course, futile; and the next step in the investigation manifested the inability of sense to account for our experience.

David Hume examined without any prepossessions or assumptions the character of experience on the principles of sensationalism. The subject on which he chiefly enlarged was causation. Unless we can be assured of necessary sequence as a law of our experience, all that we think to be knowledge becomes contingent and valueless for reason. Accordingly, on the hypothesis that knowledge is secure, the adequacy of sensationalism on this point may serve as an indication of its adequacy on others. Conversely, supposing that sensationalism is a true philosophy, its verdict on causation will serve as an indication of the security of what we call knowledge. Hume himself supposed that sensationalism was a true philosophy; and having determined that causation was merely contingent sequence, that belief in it was solely due to habit and to an irrational propensity to feign, he had no difficulty in reaching a conclusion of philosophical scepticism. Sense, he agreed, in its ultimate nature, is only a flux of momentary stimulations, and contains in itself no other order or coherence than what is involved in this definition. The sensation of the moment, therefore, is the only thing of which we can be sure, and any such conception as that of necessary sequence is entirely meaningless. Knowledge in the true sense of the word becomes

impossible: at most we can attain to probability, for any extension of inference from the momentary sensation must be precarious. Nor can the nature of the subject escape the same contingency which has overtaken the object. We are but bundles of ideas, and personality is a manifest fiction. Thus both subject and object are the fabrications of our fancy from a sense phantasmagoria.

Meanwhile a very different line of thought had worked itself out on the continent. Descartes had despaired of finding any prime certainty except in the individual's thought, and had set the fashion of looking therein for first principles. As sensation in England usurped reality, so therefore thought arrogated to itself the criterion of truth abroad. But inasmuch as this thought was that of the individual no less than sensation was, similar difficulties were involved respecting the relation existing between subject and object. These difficulties found most effective expression in Leibnitz's theory of monads. According to this ingenuous speculation every existence was a monad, and every monad was a self-contained existence, indeterminate from without; and yet this infinite multitude of monads formed a cosmos through a pre-established harmony. Once for all the tenor of their lives had been so planned and contrived that they worked independently but harmoniously together, as clocks wound up and set in unison. They were without extension, but were points of force, and thus spatial difficulties were avoided. In this way the individual was not separated from the universal, for in its life omniscience could have seen reflected the universe, so



intimately had its life been related previously to the rest of existence. The universal, too, was not sacrificed to the particular, for each individual was created according to its relationship to the universal, and only existed for it. Thus perception was but the occurrence in due time of a change in the monad corresponding to other changes without. In itself it was a kind of thought, confused thought, and required intellection to clear it into true knowledge. Thought was the real, in fact, and must be at once universal and particular:—a great truth and not to be condemned because it was expressed in this case at the expense of the creation of a Great Monad to whom all difficulties were assigned.

Such, in a few words was the state of philosophy when in 1781 appeared Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. This book permanently changed the conditions of speculative inquiry, and placed the theory of knowledge in such a position that to this day the would-be philosopher must reckon with the great thinker of Königsberg before he can claim to consider pertinently the higher problems of existence. Kant united in himself the two partial and conflicting tendencies of thought which prevailed in England and Germany. The academic routine of his youth acquainted him with the body of logical abstractions which Wolff had developed from Leibnitz's suggestions. By his own exertions Kant ascertained their vanity; and when English sensationalism appeared to be the true alternative, his study of Hume apprised him of its inability to support the fabric of our experience as we conceive it to be. Convinced that philosophy up to that

time had failed, he suspected that its subject matter might have been stated wrongly. To quote again his oft-repeated description of his innovation, he proposed to do "just what Copernicus did in attempting to explain the celestial movements. When he found that he could make no progress by assuming that all the heavenly bodies moved round the spectator, he reversed the process and tried the experiment of assuming that the spectator revolved while the stars remained at rest." \* As Copernicus reversed with success the standpoint of the Ptolemaic system, so Kant hoped to succeed in solving the questions of metaphysics by abjuring both the individual's ideas and sensations as the ultimate truth of reality, and by assuming that, instead of the mind being formed by experience, the mind itself should form received experience according to its own laws.

Pure thought, as till then conceived, Kant found to be barren, and only capable of analysing what had already been given. This might be useful, but it could neither yield knowledge nor account for it. Sensation also he had found to consist ultimately of a flux of momentary feelings, of perishing existences, of which one was past before another was present, the present only existing and finishing as soon as it existed. This Hume made clear; and he had accordingly declared all knowledge derived from such a source to be precarious. But in mere consistency he should have driven his

\* *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, Ed. Rosenkranz, p. 670; Preface to the Second Edition. The following translated quotations are from Meiklejohn's rendering of the *Kritik*.

sceptical criticism' to a far more decisive issue. Our knowledge cannot by any means be derived from such fleeting unrelated points alone. Of this Kant became aware; and thus he learnt that it was impossible to account for the most simple of our experiences on such principles. Our knowledge, so far as it confessedly goes, is of a world in one space, in one time, organically constituted by inter-connecting relations: this world is real, and different from what is only imaginary: our experiences of it are referred to permanent objects; and on reflection, as in scientific procedure, we are forced to think of it as containing one same sum of matter, and as possessing various other indispensable characteristics. Such being the indubitable facts, it is plain that sense alone is quite insufficient to explain them. Nay, not only is sense powerless to account for a cosmos, but it is incapable of accounting for any definite experience at all. The perishing existences of sense are intrinsically incognisable, for they are ever fleeting, and do not remain long enough to become apprehended, or to constitute an object. Kant, as we have said, was aware of this impotence. Tradition tells that he got disabused of his dogmatic beliefs by meeting with Hume's attack on causation; but we should make a grievous error if we imagined that Kant's real difficulties regarding sense merely amounted to a misgiving about necessary causation. In truth his whole work would be meaningless, and his words empty, if sense alone were supposed to be capable of yielding a single definite experience.

What, then, is the implication contained in this

view of sense? What can we infer from it on the one hand, and our experience as it is on the other? According to Kant we must suppose that in our experience thought contributes sundry relations co-ordinating the data of sense, subject to which all our empirical knowledge must be received. Now if this prove to be the case, these indispensable elements will be forms of synthesis or relation; and since experience is impossible without them, they will be *à priori* or prior to experience itself. Kant calls such *à priori* elements transcendental; and his philosophy consists in a transcendental criticism which endeavours to bring to light all the *à priori* principles of synthesis which serve as the ground-plan of experience.

In his quest for transcendental elements, Kant starts from the position of the ordinary consciousness, and, adopting the dualistic view of mind and matter, commences by inquiring into the relation existing between the individual mind and the objective world in space and time. Now what are the universal and necessary conditions of external intuition? Abstract all that is variable and unnecessary from the outside world, and pure space alone retains its persistence in thought. Conversely, think of what you will in the outside world, and it must be as situated somewhere in the same space. Similarly, whatever is perceived within the mind is conditioned by time. No feeling or idea can exist except at some moment of time; what is perceived can be known only as change, and change can only happen in time. In this case both kinds of sense-perception participate in the conditioning element,

for although time is not to be seen passing in the outside world, we cannot perceive this world unless our perceptions of it are cognised as ours in time. Kant concludes, therefore, that space and time are *à priori* forms of perception, the former being peculiar to external sense, the latter being common to both kinds of intuition. Their priority is an ideal priority, for though they are logically prior to, they are historically coincident with, experience itself. As regards their real worth, they are empirically real, that is, real so far as our experience is concerned, since all experience must conform to them. But as they are not things in themselves, they cannot have an independent reality in the transcendental sense of the word. Though empirically real, they are transcendently ideal.

The *à priori* nature of space and time further appears from the following considerations. If they are not *à priori*, they must be ideas possessed of an ineradicable persistence which have been formed from a vast quantity of temporal and spatial experience. But this cannot be the case; for no experience is possible without them, and to extract them from experience is a manifest *hysteron-proteron*. Again, how could the mathematical sciences possess their peculiar certainty unless they were founded on *à priori* conditions of perception, and drew their conclusions from intuited figures and series under these conditions, which accordingly afford an indication of how objects must appear to human intelligence? Any other theory could provide no safe basis for mathematics, and to be intelligible,

would have to appropriate surreptitiously the very things it seeks to explain.

Thus in the dualism of subject and object, two of the chief apparent factors of the latter are transferred to the former. Yet we must not on this account treat objective experience as an illusion. Rather only on these terms can we have confidence in its reality such as it essentially is: only on these terms can we be certain that all our experience must be thus conditioned, and so far real. Still in this transference of these universal forms from the object to the subject, it is clear that the object has been converted from a thing-in-itself into a phenomenon or appearance. The object, whatever it be, can only be apprehended in space and time, which are forms of our sensibility, and must therefore be in itself quite different from what we perceive. To this extent the object can only be phenomenal, though phenomenally real: it can only appear, but must always appear, under certain conditions.

This doctrine of space and time forms the threshold of Kant's investigations. Thence he proceeds to search for additional elements which mind contributes to form experience from the matter of sense. For by themselves space and time cannot make knowledge out of sense data, but only render such a fabrication possible. They are but possibilities of the representation of objects; unable to arrest the flux of sense and form it into an orderly experience, they yet provide conditions under which such co-ordination may take place. Some other agency, therefore, must be found working along with them to make even the illusion of knowledge possible; and

it is the determination of this factor in its different aspects which constitutes the most formidable part of Kant's argument. With great difficulty he arrives at the categories of thought under which alone experience can be received. With much obscurity he draws up a system of the conditions of knowledge in general, in which such relations as cause and effect appear as necessary features of phenomena.

Kant set out with the belief that reason is, "in regard to the principles of cognition, a perfectly distinct, independent unity, in which, as in an organised body, every member exists for the sake of the others, and all for the sake of each, so that no principle can be viewed with safety in one relationship, unless it is at the same time viewed in relation to the total use of pure reason." \* But his actual procedure was far from corresponding with this conception of the transcendental method; and the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which was simply an analysis of reason so far as it provides the necessary forms of experience, grievously failed to connect its distinctions into a coherent whole. As different *à priori* factors in experience are discovered, they are picked up as bits mechanically united to the main scheme of knowledge. Meanwhile the original distinction between subject and object has been much modified. At times Kant speaks as if he forgot the significance of his own arguments; and to the last the enumeration of the transcendental elements retains a fortuitous appearance, while the thing-in-itself is always left in a problematical

\* *Kritik*, 674.

position. Yet he worked his way up to a higher point of view where the crude dualism of subject and object seemed about to be resolved into an all-embracing unity. First bringing over to the subject side time and space as forms of perception, then discovering in the subject's understanding the forms of thought which constitute our world, and then connecting these forms together as functions of a hidden unity (no longer the subject in its original sense), only the influence of old habituations could have hidden from him the anomalous character of his *ding-an-sich*, and have prevented him from casting about for some idea to guide him in thinking out more continuously the nature of synthetic thought till the old opposition of mind and matter should be seen to be gathered up into a higher unity. Thus Kant led up to a radically new way of regarding the problem of philosophy, though he retained with little modification the old statement of it from which he started. He tried indeed to think out the movement of spirit whereby our world is what it is, but it was impossible for the first man to do more than break ground in this direction. Thought is the most recondite of cryptographs; and a single philosopher of the greatest power could not distinguish and elucidate all its intricacies at once. Gradually mankind may come to read more clearly the enigma of the world-idea; but to Kant will always be due the credit of first providing the means of making any progress therein.

X From the present point of view of general history the introduction of the transcendental



method into philosophy is of more importance on account of its negative power than in virtue of its positive developments. Kant himself said that "as the world has never been, and doubtless never will be, without some kind of metaphysic . . . it is the first and weightiest concern of philosophy to render it powerless for harm by closing up the sources of error."\* He did not succeed in imposing upon the world a new system, and though for a time his countrymen imagined that wisdom consisted in acquaintance with his doctrines, his direct influence was soon intercepted by the efforts of those who endeavoured to extend his method beyond the barriers which he had erected. But his criticism of knowledge afforded ample defence against dogmatism of all schools. If he showed that our intellectual conceptions are good only for our phenomenal world, he still more conclusively demonstrated the futility of endeavouring to explain by our sensations the nature of those relations which form the basis of experience and are implied in the very fact of sensation. Not that his protests have everywhere been successful. The indiscretions of those, who sought to extend and develop the transcendental method, gave occasion to lengthened neglect of his admonitions among the psychologists, who supposed that on an empirical analysis of mental phenomena a metaphysic of existence can be based; while in any case to reach those minds, which are naturally inclined to mistake empirical psychology for an adequate philosophy, would not have been easy without employ-

\* *Kritik*, p. 680.

ing a more persuasive style of exposition. Nevertheless it is to Kant's argument that we should trace the successful resistance to the teachings of sensationalism and materialism which came to us from last century. Though strangely disguised in the process of repeated transfer, and frequently in anomalous alliance with the impulsive assertions of common sense, his contentions passed from thinker to thinker, and were ever ready on urgent occasion to combat the pretensions of those who presume to philosophise without metaphysics. For a time this part of his influence was the less prominent because the intellectual reaction at the beginning of this century protected the old faiths from serious harm. Later, a generation arose which knew not Kant, persecuted his successors, and demanded only the means to build up the fabric of material science. But now, when physical methods appear to be reversing vulgar conceptions of knowledge, a return to Kant commends itself to all circumspect thinkers as the best preparation for a sound apprehension of the problems of existence; and it would appear that after a century's unremitting service to sober thinking, his criticism will be the chief discipline which our generation will derive in its eager search through the history of philosophy for aid in dealing with new versions of old questions.

While it was a general result of Kant's method to chasten the dogmatism of empirics, it was the object of his particular attention to rebuke the dogmatism of ontologists. His analysis of knowledge showed that man can be cognisant of pheno

mena only; and he called the process of thought, which makes truth for us from the manifold of sense, the logic of truth. Nevertheless it is a remarkable peculiarity of the human mind that it refuses to confine itself to the acquisition of mere sensuous experience, and inferences of a similar nature. At all times men have devoted attention to the study of the suprasensible, and few have been destitute of some theory respecting the unseen and unfelt. Hence he, who fashions a logic of truth limited to the empirical, must be ready with a logic of illusion to account for man's persistent excursions beyond the limits of experience. Error is as integral a part of this world as truth, and demands also to be explained. Kant, therefore, gives an account of the mental confusion which involves suprasensible conceptions; he traces the formation of ontological ideas to the nature of the reason in its endeavours to pass to supreme principles; and he shows that these ideas have only a regulative value in the extension of human knowledge. The ideas prove to be those of self, the world, and God. Whatever exists may be referred to one of these conceptions, and under them reason endeavours to gather up the whole of existence. Hence by investigating the ideas themselves metaphysicians have striven to obtain a knowledge of all that most deeply concerns man's thought and destiny; and Kant, not content with proving on his own principles the illusory nature of the ideas, criticises in detail the doctrines which have been based upon them.

In the first place Kant disposes of the theory of

the soul, which is deduced from the idea of the self apart from any passing state, by showing that it is impossible to make the transcendental subject an object of thought. Then he reviews the arguments concerning the conditions of the world, and finds that they have the remarkable peculiarity of falling into pairs of antitheses or antinomies. The assertion that "the world has a beginning in time, and is also limited in regard to space," is met by the contention that "the world has no beginning, and no limits in space;" against the statement that "there exists nothing that is not either itself simple, or composed of simple parts," it may be maintained that "there does not exist in the world any simple substance;" the hypothesis that "causality according to the laws of nature is not the only causality operating to originate the phenomena of the world," is balanced by a denial that "there is such a thing as freedom, but everything in the world happens solely according to the laws of nature;" the thesis that "there exists either in, or in connection with, the world, either as a part of it, or as the cause of it, an absolutely necessary Being," provokes the rejoinder that "an absolutely necessary Being does not exist, either in the world, or out of it, as its cause." These antitheses Kant ranges in order of battle, and brings to the test of conflict, only to discover that all are equally tenable, that no consideration makes one horn of a dilemma more eligible than another. The existence of such antinomies he concludes to be due to the fact that the ideas they start from have no constitutive value in the scheme of knowledge; but it is remarkable

that while the theses together form that kind of dogmatic philosophy which edifies the moral and religious consciousness, the antitheses form that kind which, "always with one foot in the air," commends itself to the scientific mind. Finally, Kant refutes the arguments of speculative theology in proof of the existence of God by pointing out where they involve a confusion between mere ideas and absolute existence. The illusions thus exposed are generated when reason "endeavours to free from all conditions and to comprehend in its unconditioned totality that which can only be determined conditionally in accordance with the laws of experience." \* Nevertheless the tendency of reason to invest with unity our knowledge of inner phenomena, to extend empirical knowledge indefinitely, to refer it to an ideal totality, introduces life and connection into our experience. This is the function of the ideas of reason; and thus while they afford no grounds for speculative truth, they possess a distinct office in regulating the understanding.

Since Kant's examination of the supposed sciences of rational psychology, rational cosmology, and rational theology, the purely *à priori* dogmatic method of treating the problems of existence has remained in complete disrepute. In our own country, more especially, Kantian agnosticism has experienced independent development. It furnished the germ of Sir William Hamilton's philosophy of the conditioned, and in a greater degree it supported the dialectic by which Dean Mansel endeavoured to

\* *Kritik*, p. 367.

repel the assaults of rationalism on revealed religion. But the arguments which defined for Mansel the limits of religious thought have proved to be as double-edged as Kant's antinomies. They have, indeed, in the hands of Mr. Herbert Spencer supported the agnosticism which has resulted to the present generation from that contentedness with physical methods which has derived from Comte the name of positivism. On the other hand, as we have said, it is Kant's transcendental method which seems to be about to confront this complacent acceptance of assumptions, conclusions, and denials, with those facts of man's self-consciousness on which depend his world.

But transcendentalism has already passed through a positive history of great importance. It was not in Kant's power to limit the application of his method to his own faulty analysis of knowledge. For some years his doctrines reigned supreme among his countrymen; and then there followed desperate efforts to elude the limitations which they prescribed to thought. Nor was this surprising. Transcendental philosophy is simply an endeavour to distinguish the elements of thought in their organic combination as they constitute experience. Kant concluded from his investigation that knowledge was rigorously bounded on the one hand by the matter of sense, and on the other by the conditions of empirical thought. His successors, however, refused to accept this verdict. Hegel scoffed at him for acting like old Scholasticus, who shrank from entering the water before he had learnt to swim; and that outburst of speculation,

which occurred in Germany in the next period, was in fact only a daring attempt to pass beyond the barriers erected by the *Critique of Pure Reason*. This is not the place to form any estimate of the worth of these positive speculative efforts, but the tendency which they embodied is one which must not be dropped out of the view of general history. Whatever may be thought of the essays of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, they not only formed an important epoch in the history of German thought, but they represented an aspect of Kant's teaching which is of the utmost significance to modern speculation. If it be true that man as a self-conscious being can to some degree return upon his thought, can to some extent underthink the conditions of cognition, can, in short, discern something of the fundamental conditions of his world; then at every turn of philosophic inquiry the use of this power must in some wise come into question. Certainly it is useless to start with a preconception of the nature of thought, and to determine what we know and what we cannot know before making trial. We must look before we can learn what we are able to see; and it is the main business of philosophy, or at any rate of transcendentalism, to look and see for itself what it can find involved in the truth of our experience. On the result of the experiment depends the adequacy of Kant's method, and the nature of the inquiries to be prosecuted by it. Undoubtedly, therefore, it is correct strategy on the part of Mr. Balfour, in his vigorous criticism of modern transcendentalism, to attempt first to gain the position that "it is plain

that so long as a thought is implicit it does not exist.”\*

The last consequence of Kant's philosophy which affects our purpose resulted from his speculative treatment of practical questions. The *Critique* placed out of the range of human knowledge the objects which as moral agents men are accustomed to regard with veneration. It denied that men can know anything of God, self, or will; but it coupled this denial with the reservation that what is speculatively unknowable may be apprehended practically. In succeeding works Kant brought his transcendental method to bear on the metaphysics of practice. Analysing the faculty which he called the practical reason, as he had formerly analysed what he called pure reason, he affirmed that he found practically postulated therein the objects of whose existence speculative thought could know nothing. The moral law, free will, and God, were represented to be practical truths of reason, which men must respect in deed though they be hidden from knowledge.

This application of the critical method has not in itself been productive of great philosophical consequences, though it furnished the clue to those who sought to develop transcendentalism into a system; but for the German people it was a mighty adjuration to live only for its better self. Kant's great work had made him the most influential thinker in Germany when his theory of ethics proclaimed with stern persistence that man possessed within himself a moral law, a categorical impera-

\* *Defence of Philosophic Doubt*, p. 95.



tive, which was the sole legitimate arbiter of conduct. This announcement was made also when the sophistries of popular philosophy and the emasculating influence of a nerveless enlightenment from abroad, had put to shame faith in intrinsic excellence, and had raised supine sentimentality and frivolous scepticism above lofty purpose and high ideals. To such an age, said Schiller, unworthy as it was to receive a Solon, Kant was a Draco. He respected neither its spurious culture, nor its plaintive fancies, nor its dislike to rigid principle. He held up to it the moral law of reason as the only guide of life, and forbade conduct to pursue pleasure here or happiness hereafter. The will is free, he said, because "thou oughtst" implies "thou canst:" the self lives beyond this life because otherwise our wills could never be brought into harmony with the law: and God exists because no other power could mete out to virtue that reward of happiness which reason knows it to deserve; but it is the moral law in its purity, untouched by thought of selfish satisfaction, unmoved by worship of the Deity, which alone can produce through the will truly good action. As the categorical imperative,—the command to man as a rational being to act as if the maxim of his action were to become by his will a universal law of nature,—is the logical ground for the ideas of freedom, immortality, and God; so is obedience to it leal only when tendered for its own sake. "Nothing," says Kant, "could be more fatal to morality than that we should wish to derive it from examples. For every example of it that is set

before me must be first itself tested by principles of morality, whether it is worthy to serve as an original example, *i.e.*, as a pattern, but by no means can it authoritatively furnish the conception of morality. Even the Holy One of the Gospels must first be compared with our ideal of moral perfection before we can recognise Him as such." \*

While, therefore, Kant braced the moral consciousness of the German people by his sublime conception of duty, and bequeathed to them the spirit which was to find articulate utterance in Fichte's *Reden* and the War of Liberation, he discredited yet further the ideas of popular religion by his postulatory conception of God and immortality. Dogmatic and sentimental religion was with him no part of the rational man: historical truths were to him no essential element in what is "purely an affair of reason." He vindicates against the contemptuous criticism of the *Aufklärung* the claims of the historical "husk" of Christianity to respect, but only because he considers such a matter to be on too low a level to deserve close speculative examination. When instructed ministers have to teach ignorant congregations, he admitted that the figures and inducements of popular religion should be used; but he contended that the teacher himself must neither forget the subordinate nature of the religious ideas, nor omit to interpret the scriptural narrative solely with a view to illustrate and recommend the dictates of practical reason. If German theologians have been loth

\* *Grundlegung zur Metaphysic der Sitten*: Werke, viii, 31; Abbot's translation.

to submit to the rubrics of positive religion, and have carried rationalism beyond the point consistent with a sincere profession of faith, it has not been through lack of original ethical rigour, for disregard of dogma was in a large measure a direct result from Kant's memorable exaltation of the moral law.\*

For a long time the influence of transcendentalism was confined to Germany; and thought in other countries continued to proceed as if no maturer mode of regarding philosophical problems had been introduced since the days of Hume. In England, therefore, the effect of the great sceptic's analysis was either to excite emphatic contradictions, or to induce disregard of its true meaning when convenience prompted. The former of these results, indeed, was accompanied by an effort to reach a more secure basis of knowledge, which has been of some importance in the history of philosophy. Among Hume's countrymen, recoil from his conclusions occasioned vigorous insistance on the immediate testimony of consciousness; and a small body of dogmatists arose who strove to defeat the destructive tendency of psychological criticism by confronting it with a scheme of ultimate unanalysable truths. These truths or necessary beliefs of the Scottish school, since they were said to be the property of every intelligence, and to be recognisable by every unsophisticated individual, were

\* As is fitting in a biography, his moral and religious position receives more than the usual attention in Stuckenberg's *Life of Immanuel Kant*. It is also treated with uncommon justice in Seth's *Development from Kant to Hegel*.



certain degree of practical purpose. The first aim of empirical psychology is to perfect the theory and practice of education for the individual; \* its next object is to provide data for the improvement of societies through legislation and culture; and its application to speculative problems should follow after these two questions have received attention. In England, where men can as little as elsewhere dispense with a philosophy of some sort, but where the slenderest connection with immediate practice is held in more esteem than the strongest relation to abstract truth, the metaphysical aspect of psychology has been of historical importance equally with either of the other aspects, though it was here that practical science was most successfully cultivated.

The fundamental principle of empirical psychology is the law of association between mental states, which has been recognised by various writers since the time of Aristotle. It was first systematically applied to explain the phenomena of mind by Hartley in his work on man, published 1749. In this book sensations were taken to be the originals of our ideas, whose association was supposed to result from contiguity of the sensations in the same instant or successive instants of time. On this basis Hartley tried to explain the intellectual and moral nature of man with much sagacity, though he persistently connected with it a physical hypothesis of mental processes which had been suggested to him by some remarks in Newton's works. †

\* This truth has recently received much recognition and illustration from Mr. Sully in his *Outlines of Psychology*.

† "Some associations," he says, "are found so early, repeated

This theory of vibrations and vibratiuncles was crude, and at that time supported by very little evidence; but it was certainly the precursor of the physiological treatment of psychology in modern times. Thus in history Hartley is prominent as a supporter of sensational and materialistic philosophy. Yet Hartley himself composed his treatise in the interests of moral and religious improvement; and so sincere was his large-hearted concern for what is good, that he has gained the admiration and respect of thinkers of all schools. His materialism and necessarianism, though they resulted from his observations on man's "frame," were not permitted to corrupt his observations on man's "duty and expectations." "I would not," he says, "be any way interpreted so as to oppose the immateriality of the soul. On the contrary, I see clearly, and acknowledge readily, that matter and motion, however subtly divided, or reasoned upon, yield nothing more than matter and motion still." \* "I nowhere deny practical free will," he protests, "but, on the contrary, establish it (if so plain a thing will admit of being farther established) by showing

so often, riveted so strong, and have so close a connection with the common nature of man, and the events of life which happen to all, as, in a popular way of speaking, to claim the appellation of original and natural dispositions; and to appear like instincts, when compared with dispositions evidently factitious; also like axioms, and intuitive propositions, eternally true according to the usual phrase, when compared with moral reasonings of a compound kind. But I have endeavoured to show in these papers that all reasoning, as well as affection, is the mere result of association." *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations*: ed. 1801, I. 499.

\* *Ibid.*, I. 512.

in what manner it results from the frame of our natures.”\* “All the pleasures and pains of sensation, imagination, ambition, self-interest, and theopathy, as far as they are consistent with one another, with the frame of our natures, and with the course of the world, beget in us a moral sense, and lead us to the love and approbation of virtue, and to the fear, hatred, and abhorrence of vice. This moral sense, therefore, carries its own authority with it, inasmuch as it is the sum total of all the rest, and the ultimate result from them.”† The doctrine of mechanism, he contends, “has a tendency to make us labour more earnestly with ourselves and others, particularly children, from the greater certainty attending all endeavours that operate in a mechanical way;” while “it is evident from common observation, and more so from the foregoing theory, that children may be formed and moulded as we please.”‡ And he concludes his work by deploring the consequences of a corrupt and perverted education of youth.

Hartley’s practical bent was hardly consistent with subtle consideration of the higher metaphysical problems, but this did not impair his influence on English thought. His speculative views were handed down through Priestley and Tucker; and the fourth edition of his book was published in 1801. Thus the interval between the date of the *Observations* and that of the next great work on the subject,

\* *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations*: ed. 1801, I. vi.

† *Ibid.*, I. 497.

‡ *Ibid.*, I. 510 II. 453.

amounting though it did to eighty years, was no period of oblivion for the associationist psychology; and James Mill's *Analysis* only superseded Hartley's treatise in this century by asserting its principle anew and extending the application of its method. But the new version of the theory contained as many speculative conclusions as the old one did practical lessons, though Mill was no metaphysician, and his character as a psychologist and publicist was marked by intense faith in the power of education. In the *Analysis*, it is true, there is no theory of nervous action, but the law of association is applied to a wider range of mental processes, and is artlessly made to supply answers or denials to the most abstract questions. In its general form Mill states the law after Hartley:—"Our ideas spring up, or exist, in the order in which the sensations existed of which they are the copies."\* These ideas are compounded by simultaneous and successive recurrence till they coalesce into complex ideas, which also appear to be simple and irresolvable; and these again combine into decomplex ideas of very abstract character. Hence, in reducing all mental phenomena to their simplest elements, it appears that if the mind cannot blend the notions of two surfaces, a plane and a convex, as one surface, both plane and convex, it is for the same reason that prevents the mind from associating together the idea of assafoetida and the taste of sugar. A strong association, according to Mill, excludes whatever is opposite to it. "I have

\* *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*: edited by J. S. Mill; I. 78. Cf. Hartley: I. pp. ii., 65.



one idea associated with the word pain. Why can I not associate pleasure with the word pain? Because another indissoluble association springs up and excludes it."\* Therefore, it may be concluded, that the mutually exclusive conceptions of mathematics and the antagonistic ideas of taste are separated by distinctions of precisely the same kind. Mill states this theory in a very summary manner, though his son considers that it deserves to be dwelt upon; but it was one of James Mill's great merits that he never helped to deceive his reader respecting the scope of his arguments. He proffered his explanation, meagre though it were, and then shortly asserted that the problem itself was no more extensive; and if he presumed blindness he always shunned confusion.

But bluntness of statement failed to expose to himself and his followers the irrelevance of his metaphysical explanations. A theory of the objective world did not attract his concern. It was sufficient to say, as he did in reference to causality, "When we speak of objects, it is necessary to remember, that it is sensations, not ideas, to which we are then directing our attention. All our sensations, we say, are derived from objects; in other words, object is the name we give to the antecedents of our sensations. And reciprocally, all our knowledge of objects is the sensations themselves. We have the sensations, and that is all."† But such conceptions as those of space and time received more careful consideration because they appeared to be composite ideas of a definite

\* *Analysis*, I. 97.

† *Ibid.*, II. 37.

character. Leading metaphysical notions were thus brought within the scope of psychology to give it an appearance of philosophical sufficiency, which with James Mill largely depended on unphilosophical nescience. "Under the modest title of an explanation of the meaning of several names," says his son, he presents us "with a series of discussions of the deepest and most intricate questions of all metaphysics;" but, in truth, this procedure was no imitation of Plato, but part of a determined purpose to shelve or ignore all metaphysical questions proper.

Thus, to select one example out of many, his theory of space consisted in an explanation of synchronous relative terms, such as high, low, east, west, right, left, and so on. Beginning with a single particle of matter as a centre, to which other particles may be aggregated in the line of every possible radius, the idea of position is reached. Without noticing that the whole conception of space is implied in this datum, Mill then proceeds to imagine a juxtaposition of particles in one radius till they constitute a line of less or greater length. Now "line is a word of great importance, because it is by that, chiefly, we express ourselves concerning synchronous order, or frame names for positions." The sensations, whence are generated our ideas of synchronous order, are from two sources; they are partly the sensations of touch, and partly those of which we have spoken under the name of muscular sensations, the feelings involved in muscular action." From this source, from "certain repetitions of particular tactual sensations, and

particular muscular sensations, received in a certain order," in short, from "the feelings which we are capable of receiving from the particle with which we may suppose a line of particles to commence," the mind obtains ideas to the combination of which it gives the name of line. "But when I have got my idea of a line, I have also got my idea of extension. For what is extension but lines in every direction?"\* Particle, having thus yielded all that was put into it at first, has to be subjected to a negative process to make it correspond with the abstract idea of space. In a section on what he calls privative terms, Mill thus recurs to the idea of extension. "Solid extension, or bulk, is merely the idea of bulk" with the idea of resistance dropped; that is, the place for bulk: Position. "But place is, what? A portion of Space; or, more correctly speaking, space itself with limitation." "In the idea of space, the idea of infinity is included." "When we apply 'infinite' to extension, we do so equally to all its three modifications, to lines, surfaces, and bulk. How we do so is obvious. We know no infinite line, but we know a longer, and a longer. A line is lengthened, as number is increased, by continual additions; a line of any length, say of an inch, is increased by the continual addition of other lengths, say of an inch. In the process, then, by which we conceive the increase of a line, the idea of one portion more, is continually associated with the preceding length; and to what extent soever it is carried, the association of one portion more, is equally close and

\* Il. 24, 26, 29, 32, 34.

irresistible. This is what we call the idea of infinite extension, and what some people call the *necessary* idea." \*

In the last portion of the *Analysis*, which is occupied with deriving the ideas of morality from non-moral elements, the practical aspect of associationist psychology comes again into favourable prominence. It is, indeed, in the departments of education, jurisprudence, and sociology, that Bentham, Mill, and their school, have achieved all their success. Nor has this been inconsiderable; but as long as English thought mistakes a practical method for a metaphysical system, the historian must continue to point out how greatly the irrelevance of sensational psychology in speculative questions is answerable for the barren results of philosophical investigation, in an age when discussion has been active beyond example. And this is not the less necessary because James Mill's successors have found themselves forced to acknowledge some facts to be ultimate and irresolvable, which, despite his logical severity, he treated in a circle for the sake of maintaining his disbelief in "mystery." For when they cannot follow him in denying, they continue to imitate him by shelving, fundamental questions; and, like him, they ignore the insufficiency of which this necessity convicts their method. Yet, by sharing the dogmatism of their antagonists of the Scotch School, they have added to their popularity, as these last again have extended their influence by encroaching on the province of associationism. But reference to ill-

\* *Ibid.*, II. pp. 110, 111, 112.

assorted eclecticism brings philosophy in this island into connection with Continental thought. In France, at the same time that Hartley wrote, Locke's sensational principles also received extension and application from Condillac; and this manner of thinking remained dominant till, at the beginning of this century, Royer-Collard taught Scotch intuitionism. Hence British speculation at this period, though of independent growth, was typical of a widespread intellectual tendency, and no less than German transcendentalism contributed to the ideas by which modern Europe had to seek to strengthen faith, remove doubt, or establish negation.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### NATIONAL LITERATURE AND ART IN GERMANY.

“So verschieden die Zeiten sind, so verschieden muss auch die Sphäre des Geschmacks sein, obgleich immer einerlei Regeln wirken; die Materialien und Zwecke sind zu allen Zeiten anders.”

*Herder.*

“In des Herzens heilig stille Räume  
Muszt du fliehen aus des Lebens Drang;  
• Freiheit ist nur in dem Reich der Träume,  
Und das Schöne blüht nur im Gesang.”

*Schiller.*

AFTER account has been taken of the political structure and aspirations, of the industrial organisation, commercial principles, and mechanical resources, of the scientific knowledge and speculative insight, which form the solid groundwork of civilised societies, there still remains an important factor in social development which can be included under none of these heads, though it is never without some points of connection with them. This outstanding element resides in the province of pure literature. Too often, and in Germany very frequently, attempts to deal with history from a general point of view, pay excessive attention to a critical estimate of the literature of the period.\*

\* As an example of this habit may be mentioned Honegger's valuable work, *Grundsteine einer Allgemeinen Kulturgeschichte der Neuesten Zeit.*

The primary forces of social life, with the exception of those of war and statesmanship, receive scant attention, while the secondary influences of literary compositions obtain all the importance which a chronicle of publications, biographies of authors, pedigrees of books, and criticism of their literary merits, can confer. The common reproach against literary men that they attach too great importance to literature is indeed merely a remonstrance against an error in historical proportion, which is, however, equally chargeable against the usual treatment of politics.

From the point of view of our present purpose the most notable literary event of modern Europe was neither the work of a commanding genius, nor the formation of a school of writers, but the fact that a great people produced a literature of its own. The means by which Germany has attained to political unity and strength in our own time, tend to reflect on the War of Liberation disproportionate significance to the neglect of those spiritual influences which are only less conspicuous because they are more fundamental. Yet the meaning of the memorable fight cannot be discerned unless it is understood to have supervened on an invigorating intellectual reunion of the German people.\* But the greatness of the movement far transcended its services to a single nation. Like the industrial revolution in England, like its own philosophical advances, Germany's literary revival contributed elements of intrinsic value to the culture of civilisation. Like all literary pro-

\* See above, pp. 204-6.

ducts, however, it retained in a greater degree a national character; and if its results are in some measure the property of all highly developed peoples, its genesis was only possible in the Germany of that period.

With returning prosperity in the first quarter of the eighteenth century awoke an ambition among the more flourishing German burghers to possess a national literature of a worthy type of excellence. The desire was inevitable in people of their force and intelligence as soon as the depressing effects of misfortune ceased to thwart the spontaneous energies of the race; and its outcome made itself perceptible in many fields of intellectual exercise. In the universities, where regard for knowledge and study had, under the unfavourable circumstances, degenerated into pedantic care for the husks of learning, the movement appeared as a more human interest in the works of classical authors, and a new appreciation of the life of the ancient world. The teaching of philosophy, also, began to be based less on authority and more on unrestrained reason. For the unlearned public, indeed, popular writers discussed the problems of philosophy in a shallow rationalistic manner which at least encouraged unprejudiced discussion. In this way the sceptical tendencies of French thought were independently produced, and the bonds of morality and religion were threatened. But the new spirit had already issued in the opposite direction of pietism; and the influx of French enlightenment, though its path had been made easy by the so-called Aufklärung,



only exaggerated one phase of a movement which in its entirety was mightily deepening and expanding the powers of the German mind. At the same time that the authority of French literature gained extension, the works of English writers were appreciatively studied.

The first systematic attempt to give Germany a national literature was instituted when Gottsched in 1727 commenced his career in Leipzig, one of the most prosperous of the German towns. This industrious writer perceived the want of his generation. He induced attention to the German language, and promoted on all sides associations for cultivating a purer literary form of the national tongue. By his energetic efforts in this direction he obtained the position of a literary dictator; but when he proceeded to offer guidance for the production of a national literature from the improved language, he turned out to be capable of only devising mechanical rules and suggesting imitations of the French classics. Yet though Gottsched had no genius, his activity and sagacity conferred on Germany that gift of initiative the importance of which history, though seldom able to appraise, must always emphatically recognise. His significance, in fact, chiefly appears in the heated discussions which his inadequate views provoked between his own school and other literary groups, who elsewhere were striving to realise the true nature and functions of poetry. Of a like negative character was Gottsched's most palpable service to German culture. In order to reach most directly the national mind he exerted all his influence to

improve the drama. While grievously failing to accomplish his object of founding a national stage, he was, with the help of his family and a gifted actress, quite successful in preparing the way for a German stage of a civilised type. Of course he could not reach the playhouses of the courts, with their Italian opera and French comedies, but he overthrew the popular drama, with its vagabond professors and rude plays, and organised the German theatre in a form capable of doing national service when national talent should appear. By thus doing he banished the last fragment of indigenous culture; but, as Biedermann has remarked, though Lessing and Justus Möser lamented the loss of the old popular plays and buffoonery, neither of them dared to endeavour to recall the old pieces to the boards which Gottsched had swept and devoted to more refined uses.\*

It was indeed Lessing himself who carried out the project which stirred the ambition, but exceeded the resources, of the Saxon innovator. He it was who roused Germans to independent effort, and emancipated them from servile allegiance to foreign models. But such was the state of the German intellect at this time that even he was unable to advance towards these objects without resorting to external guidance. If his first service to national culture was to expose the narrowness and artificiality of the French classicism, his next was to point out the true spirit and instructiveness of English literature. Gottsched had written an imitation of Addison's *Cato*, but only because Addison's work was in the French

\* *Deutschland im Achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, II. 492.

style; Lessing wrote *Miss Sara Sampson*, after the example of Richardson, because he conceived this writer to be an accurate exponent of a truly English movement.\* The study of English literature was then in vogue among all the more vigorous literary men of Germany; and Lessing not only revealed to the burghers by his tragedy of English middle class life that tragic art is not exclusively concerned with persons of high degree and forms of dignified movement, but he was greatly instrumental in leading the more advanced intellects to see that in Shakespeare the English and German minds find most original points of affinity. Speaking of Gottsched in the most celebrated of his *Literary Letters*, he said: "From our old dramatic pieces which he rejected, he might have remarked that we strike in rather with the English than the French taste; that in our tragedies we wish to see and think more than the timid French tragedy gives us occasion to see or think; that the great, the terrible, the melancholy, affects us better than the coy, the tender, the loving; that too great simplicity tries us more than too great complexity, etc. He had but to follow this track to be conducted by a straight path to the English theatre. . . . If the masterpieces of Shakespeare, with some modest changes, had been translated, I am convinced that better consequences would have followed than could follow from acquaintance with Corneille and Racine. In the first place, the people would have taken far greater pleasure in the former than they can take in the latter; and in the second place, the former would

\* Cf. Sime: *Lessing*, I.

have awakened quite different minds among us from those whom the latter have awakened. For genius can only be kindled by genius, and most easily by a genius which seems to have to thank nature for everything, and does not frighten us away by the tedious perfections of art.”\*

But Lessing did not only invoke the national genius. He also laboured to prepare for it timely instruction in the true conditions of art. His literary style afforded an unique example of simplicity and flexibility in the German language; while his critical disquisitions, instead of seeking arbitrary canons, laid down laws of nature to which genius must conform in order to attain highest expression. By reverting to Aristotle's principles he arrived at rules under which the truth of nature was better preserved than by formally obeying the French unities. He performed, indeed, for the creative genius of the future the functions of worldly understanding;† and among initiators he is remarkable in that his example never deluded the weakest of his successors.‡ In behalf of national content in literature, he gave his countrymen a play in *Minna von Barnhelm* which was German without being barbarous, a work of art which was of independent origin without being extravagant. In *Emilia Galotti* he gave them an equally native product, though he shifted the scene to Italy in order to be free to rebuke the corruptness of the smaller German courts. In *Nathan der*

\* *Ibid.*, I. 181.

† Cf. Gottschall: *Die Deutsche Nationalliteratur*, I. 17.

‡ Cf. Gervinus: *Gesch. der Deutschen Dichtung*, iv. 356.

*Weise* he powerfully pleaded the cause of religious equality and of tolerant feeling in daily life, and appealed to Germans to treat as brethren those strangers in their midst whom his friend Mendelssohn was successfully striving to raise from a state of bigoted inaccessibility to cheerful participation in national culture and life.

In Lessing's own day, there were not wanting pledges that a new spirit was passing into German literature. Winckelmann completed the refutation of French classicism, and discredited all formal imitation, by presenting Greek art in a manner which made it a living language to modern men. While his writings powerfully aided the improvement of the German language for literary purposes, he handed on to his successors a conception of classical study, which not only furnished ideals to be united with the fervent elements of modern thought, but persuaded his countrymen that what is received from the past is of no profit till it has been appropriated by a natural process of assimilation. Thus his *History of Greek Art* formed in the new literature a counterpart to the scholarly movement at the seats of learning. Wieland, on the other hand, put forth in his voluminous compositions modern examples of literary gracefulness, which, notwithstanding their want of substantial content, were of great use in extending the scope of literature from the learned class to all who cared to read. The patriotic desire to give the nation a great epic of its own, was the inspiring thought of Klopstock. But here the wretched condition of the German nationality thwarted the aspirations

of the poet. Having dismissed the idea of taking Henry the Fowler for a hero, Klopstock was compelled to abandon his search for a national subject, and spend his best forces on his unshapen *Messias*, while he sought patriotic themes for less ambitious efforts in the dim regions of early German history. Though critics are agreed that he was not the man to write a great epic under any circumstances, his nobility of purpose, vigour of language, and freshness of conception, his love of humanity, country, and freedom, embodied as they are in lyrics of true power, as well as in his sacred poem, were of great educational value to his generation. In truth, at that time, Germany hardly wanted a national epic. What its people could learn from the celebration of great deeds, could equally well be learnt from the career of Frederick the Great. Indeed, when literary men cast about for an epic subject, the history of the Prussian king continually presented itself. Klopstock himself thought of it for a moment.\* But against an early poetical treatment of the subject, there were many strong reasons; and when, in 1790, Schiller seriously tried to undertake it, he had to give up the attempt in the conviction that in the character of the hero there was too little to inspire affection.†

When Lessing laid down his rules of literary art, writers were disposed to await from events, like those of the first part of Frederick's reign, an improvement in the state of the German nation. But this expectancy soon wore off; and the longing

\* Cf. Biedermann : *loc. cit.*, III., iii. 240.

† See Düntzer : *Life of Schiller*, pp. 280, 293.

for freedom and originality, which Lessing expressed and heightened, ceased to obtain any satisfaction from the contemplation of social and political circumstances. As a new generation grew up, the craving for independence and spontaneity came into harsher conflict with external conditions. The aspirations of the mind found only bitter mockery in the realities of the world. Disgusted with actual existence, the German youth sought to vent its impulses in ideal creations. From the mortifications of life it fled within the asylum of the imagination. But the spirit, which could not face the restraints and disappointments of the traditional order, was not able to brook the laws and conditions of genuine art. Resort to subjective activity issued only in barren extravagances.

With this tendency Lessing had no sympathy. During the latter part of his career, he ceased to participate in the aspirations of the day, and he retired in despair from the theatre which he had done so much to emancipate. And truly the productions of the *Sturm und Drang* movement,—taking the phrase in the narrower sense to which the name of Klinger's play properly restricts it,—were from the point of view of literary and artistic criticism only capable of exciting regret and disappointment in one whose demand for independence was ever accompanied by insistence on the discipline of reason and the nature of things. In literary history, they are remembered only on account of their connection with Goethe's early development. But in general history the episode possesses peculiar interest. That a nation, in the

early moments of its awakening, should endeavour to develop the resources of its language, is no extraordinary thing. That recourse should be had to the literature of some more advanced, but kindred nation, for guidance and matter in the exercise of a renovated language, is a regular consequence of the process of national revivals. But for these steps to be overtaken by a wild effort to attain independently to literary freedom and originality, not because the generation really possessed genius or artistic power, but merely because a heightened sense of dignity and force, repressed by the conventions and institutions of actual life, sought satisfaction in strenuous efforts to produce in the regions of imagination and sentiment what was natural, powerful, and inviolable ;—this sequel, however erratic and ridiculous it might be in its particular results, was only possible if a vast fund of latent energy existed in the society. It proved that Germany's revival was not solely due to advance in material comfort. It revealed the operation of intellectual and ethical forces, which were to make of a social improvement a national regeneration.

The impotence of Lessing's strong hand to curb the fretting emotions of the *Sturm und Drang* period, was in some degree due to Lessing's own deficiencies. The logic of the great critic prescribed the conditions under which the artist must embody his creations for the world, but it could not give instruction to creative imagination itself. Such pretensions were worthy only of ignorant pedants like Gottsched. And what Lessing's



science could not reach, his works failed to illustrate. His plays were worthy examples of his critical doctrine, but they were not poetic creations. His high-wrought understanding, developed though it was to the borders of genius, fell short of the point where law mediates between genius and the understanding, and genius subordinates law to its necessities. Hence, he left open a way of evasion from his monitions to those who thought much of the potentialities within them and nothing of the mundane laws without. Now the fantastic struggles of immaturity at this period were fully believed by those who experienced them to be the strivings of genius. The delusion, which every fervid youth could harbour, was the cause of the erratic nature of the storm and stress. For the moment, the deep longings of the German people were confounded with the infatuation of individuals.

The origin of this hallucination is remarkable for much more than its immediate effects. It was in truth not only the cause of an evanescent mania ; it was also the starting point of a new development of literary and scientific culture. Great as were the services of English literature in behalf of natural sentiment in Germany, they were not more deep-reaching than was the influence of archaic studies and conceptions in behalf of a more profound view of nature itself. If the feelings of the time cannot be understood without taking into account the popularity of Richardson and Young, of Sterne and Goldsmith, the substantial results of the period are incomprehensible unless due attention is paid to the new delight in what was thought primitive and

*volksthümlich*. This tendency was the inevitable outcome of a desire for original production in a people whose genius was still in durance; and it was the cause of the study of Shakespeare when the great poet was still without honour in his own country. But it grew into enthusiasm as different discoveries and publications afforded matter to the imagination and intellect. All accounts of German culture at this period agree in ascribing great influence to Macpherson's Ossianic poems, the original character of which was taken for granted. Indeed, the features of *Ossian* which betray most clearly the spurious nature of the translation, the vagueness of the figures, and the frequent description of natural scenery, only made the work more acceptable to uncritical German readers. They craved to approach the sources of simple and unsophisticated thought and feeling; and they found *Ossian* the more grateful because what primitive poetry it contained was attired in a romantic garb which they fondly believed to be of archaic origin. About the same time Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, and books of a similar tendency were read, and the later Edda became known. When therefore Rousseau's gospel of nature was published, it met with passionate recognition. Men of all dispositions were under the existing conditions charmed by his fancies of primitive life; but those who were inclined to seek in literary relics a source of natural simplicity and spontaneity hoped that all vexations would disappear by turning under his guidance directly to nature. In those who were caught in the whirl of storm and stress, the ideal of freedom

and originality encouraged boundless licence of the inner life.

The man in whom first appeared the deeper meaning of the *Sturm und Drang* movement was Herder. In him the desire for complete life induced fundamental revision of his thoughts and feelings, though his wide sympathies and extensive views saved him from the illusions of individual subjectiveness. Of himself he experienced in full degree the attractions of Rousseau's teaching: guided by Hamann, who had been in England, he studied with zeal Shakespeare, Ossian, and the songs of old: instigated by the same friend, he formed the most comprehensive ideal of culture; and from Kant's personal instruction he learnt to approach knowledge under all its aspects. But his strength of character and force of mind enabled him to combine these various influences into one coherent tendency, without making the mistakes which marred the intellectual development of many of his countrymen. Though not a systematic teacher, his whole influence as an individual and a writer was to make men more aware of the solidarity of their circumstances, and the continuity of their past and present history. While surpassing Lessing in condemning imitation, and exalting the idiosyncratic elements in national life, he set forth a high standard of culture, and insisted on the correspondence which should obtain between a nation's circumstances and its religion, poetry, and art. In his enthusiasm for national genius, he wished that Germany might have been a Britain; in his love for what is unsophisticated, he dwelt with rapture on the

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beauties of primitive civilisation. But no one did so much to protect his countrymen from the vices of insularity, or to give them an adequate conception of man's needs and capabilities.

Herder, then, passed beyond the conflict in the life of the individual to the synthesis which forms the life of the race and the species. He lived down the paltry sense of present vexations, and arrived at a noble consciousness of the complex nature of human development. His own insight was most sure into the earlier forms of human culture; and his poetic faculty only attained its proper exercise when he sang over again in his own language the folk-songs which he diligently collected from all ages and countries. But his sense for the products of times other than his own was so deep and universal that he opened up new and truer views of all spiritual possessions of man, and of many a period in the past. He it was, indeed, who initiated the modern comparative study of poetry, art, language, and religion, who familiarised students with the evolutionary treatment of civilisation in general; while his views on recorded history gave Germans a new interest in their past, and showed them that, notwithstanding their present plight, they were one of the national forces of the world. Thus Herder was not only a powerful agent in bringing to maturity the intellectual life of modern Germany, but he was one of the most able promulgators of the historical idea which the century brought forth as a corrective of its own errors. Turgot, as we have already had occasion to remark, saw clearly the principle of growth in

human affairs, and he was fully conscious that social life consists in the organic combination of many elements. A Swiss, too, Wegelin, one of Frederick the Great's professors at Berlin, had expressed the great truth of continuity of outward facts, and the persistence of a slowly changing substratum of ideas. And several historians of this time were guided by a broader conception of historical science than had been within the grasp of the chroniclers. But no one had shown as Herder did such a true "feeling of the rich variety of elements in human life, and of the duty of the historian of humanity to take account of all its aspects."\* Starting from the position of man's dwelling place in the solar system, he regarded the diversity of nature as a progressive ascent to man himself. The final cause of all history, he contended, is humanity; and while he strove to subordinate the whole world to man, he expanded the conception of man's nature till it embraced all existence as it is for us.

Though Herder was a worthy exponent of the lasting elements in the literary strivings of his time, he was in no way qualified to bring them to fruition. He was able to present them as poetically scientific conceptions; he could elucidate them to the bounds of new discovery; but he could neither originate from them a new science, nor develop them into abiding works of art. For this reason his services to the German nation have met with the uncertain recognition common to work which is definitely neither science nor poetry. And his position has further been obscured by the pre-eminence of one

\* See Flint: *Philosophy of History*, pp. 354, 382.

who realised with splendid success the artistic possibilities which the new spirit had thrown open to genius. Yet the importance of Herder's functions is not really thus diminished in any degree. In truth it only becomes the more perceptible as his relation to the great poet is more fully comprehended. When Goethe associated with Herder in Strasburg, he was a young man of twenty-two, who already had acquired a rich experience of the impulses which youth could receive in German burgher life at that time. During his university course at Leipzig he had learned to despise the literary methods of the dying generation: by Oeser, the instructor of Winckelmann, he had been encouraged to cultivate a pure and simple taste in art; at the Dresden picture-gallery he had learned to look at nature with the Dutch masters. He had read something of Shakespeare, and drawn instruction from Lessing and Wieland. Science he had pursued in the form of alchemy, and religion he had felt with the pietists. The despair of thwarted passion had accrued to him from his early loves; while the attractions and loose manners of the stage, and the company of not very respectable acquaintances, had expanded his notions of conduct much beyond the necessary limits of everyday life. But his had not been the cruel experiences of poverty which unbalanced, while they stimulated, the powers of many of his weaker contemporaries. At Strasburg Goethe pursued these impressions into more intense forms. Scientific study was supplied by medicine and chemistry: his boyish flirtations were exchanged for an attachment which might conceivably have

proved permanent; and his religious feelings gradually conformed to the sentimental pantheism which at that time attended an uncritical, though sympathetic, study of Spinoza. But it was from his intercourse with Herder, who, five years older than himself, had already attained reputation and seen the world, that the young Goethe gained most instruction and guidance. Herder was visiting Strasburg in the futile hope of profiting by a surgical operation on the eye; and thus his sarcastic temper was rendered especially severe and trying for the youth who patiently tendered him companionship and care. Whatever Herder had to impart, Goethe received in the form which most directly hit his own faults and needs. Herder finally discredited to him the pretensions of French culture, and exposed the poverty of current German literature. He led Goethe to a fuller appreciation of Shakespeare, Ossian, popular songs, and Rousseau; and awoke in him a deep response to the truth of nature.

Thus at the most susceptible age Goethe received in completest form the spiritual impulses of the day. But, poet though he was, he no more allowed himself to be seduced into unavailing declamation than did Herder. At once his commanding mind reacted on the matter received from without, and developed it into his own property. When yet in Strasburg, his sense for what was true and lasting in human works enabled him to see aright what was still wanting to execute the architectural plan of the cathedral. At a time when Gothic buildings were regarded by the cultivated world as products of barbarism, he could see that, as in the works of

nature, everything in them, even to the minutest fibril, was formed towards the whole as an end: "wie durchbrochen Alles, und doch für die Ewigkeit." In appreciating Albert Dürer he uttered the profound remark, "Art is long in forming before it is beautiful, and yet is true and great art; aye, indeed, often truer and greater than the beautiful itself." In Shakespeare he saw the most powerful representations of nature, so powerful and tremendous that common conceptions were at first overwhelmed with dismay; and he asserted of his work, what philosophers have said of the world, that what one thinks evil in it is only the other side of good, and is equally necessary to its existence and to the whole.\*

Now, too, the spirit of production mastered him. Goethe had already written several small pieces of poetry, but his first earnest attempt to unburden himself of the feelings which new knowledge had awakened in him was a drama of the Middle Ages, in which force and originality should no more than in Shakespeare's plays suffer from the restraints of form. The hero of this play is Götz von Berlichingen, a knight of the Empire when club-law was yielding to the authority of the modern state. But in him Goethe portrayed no doomed obstacle to the advance of civilisation. The story of his fall is made to represent the triumph of chicanery and degeneracy over noble and natural manhood. Götz of the iron hand is the embodiment of individual freedom and straightforwardness, his enemies of

\* See Hettner: *Gesch. der Deutschen Literatur im achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, Buch. III., Abtheilung I. 122-124.



social fraud and hypocrisy. He falls because history says he did ; but Goethe takes care that spectators shall deplore his fate, and heed only his independent spirit, his knightly virtues, and invocations to freedom.\* This play immediately obtained great popularity, and formed the model for a multitude of inferior imitations. In itself no work of art, it was written with extraordinary force, freshness, and feeling, and justly commanded admiration at this juncture in German literature. By the public, however, these merits were completely neglected in its interest for the social antagonism which it represented ; and the imitators were secure of almost equal popularity, so long as they staunchly upheld the cause of rude freedom against modern institutions.† But Goethe had another aspect of the time's *schmerz* to illumine. Sick at heart because the last object of his affections was betrothed to another, and startled by the suicide of a love-lorn acquaintance, he wrote a novel, depicting the sufferings of a tender, sentimental soul in this rough world of social distinctions and marriage-bonds. In *Werther* the main cause of the hero's suicide is disappointed love, but inasmuch as the catastrophe is a solution of the general conflict between the individual's yearnings and society's laws, an additional motive

\* Goethe was not singular in his conception of the Middle Ages in Germany. He derived it from Möser, the most influential historian of the time. Schmid, another historian, wrote to Möser, "I am convinced that the good time of Germany was when club-law prevailed."—See Julian Schmidt: *Gesch. der Deutschen Lit.*, I. 24.

† Goethe has given an amusing travesty of this craze in *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre*, Bk. I., ch. x.

is supplied by foiled ambition. Napoleon, ignorant of the circumstances in which *Werther* was written, noticed the combination of motives as a flaw in the novel when he conversed with Goethe at Erfurt in 1808; and by that time the poet seems to have lost the key to his own procedure. But *Werther* itself, and the raging sympathy for Werther's fate, can only be explained if, besides the love-troubles which every generation suffers, the existence of a special feeling of social dissatisfaction is taken into account.

By *Götz* and *Werther* Goethe proved himself to be in language the first poet of his generation. But a perception of the vast nature of the man is not possible till it is understood that about the same time he was occupied with works which make him no less the poet of the period's intellectual tendencies. When Goethe went to Weimar at the end of 1775 he had written, besides a quantity of smaller pieces, the fragment *Prometheus*, which expresses the defiant, negative side of pantheism. He had, moreover, written nearly all of what was published in 1790 as the *Faustfragment*, that is, about half of the complete first part of the poem, and according to his own testimony he had conceived the idea of the whole tragedy. In the two parts of *Faust*, Goethe appears as the deepest and most comprehensive poet of European spiritual life during an eminently rich period of sixty years. In it we see reflected in lines of concentrated import the movement of German culture, and the course of European thought; in it we have an allegory of individual development at that time, and, since evolution in the individual follows that in the race,

of part of individual development for many generations to come.\* Such a work could only be produced by one who had much of his own self to add, but it will be long before men and women with intellectual yearnings cease to find in *Faust* a partial reflex of their own inner experiences: never will they cease to find therein the most instructive and profound historical document of the age to which it belongs. Read without help from subtle commentators, the poem affords the most enlightening paraphrase of recorded history which genius through a long and vigorous life could set forth for the behoof of contemporaries and the guidance of posterity.

Faust is the embodiment of human aspirations when men have found inadequate to their wants the lore transmitted from the past. At such a time an inward impulse hurries afar the nobler minds: "Ihn treibt die Gährung in die Ferne," says Mephistopheles of the great Doctor. As Faust approaches the limits of his resources he becomes emboldened to abandon the seclusion of the student for the manifold experiences of life.† This mood, this longing for spontaneity and natural revelation,

\* Goethe himself said of Faust in his eightieth year:—"It permanently preserves the period of development of a human soul. . . The author is at present far removed from such conditions: the world, likewise, has to some extent other struggles to undergo: nevertheless, the state of men, in joy and sorrow, remains very much the same; and the latest-born will still find cause to acquaint himself with what has been enjoyed and suffered before him, in order to adapt himself to that which awaits him."—Bayard Taylor's *Translation of Faust*, I. 365.

† Ich fühle Muth, mich in die Welt zu wagen,  
Der Erde Weh, der Erde Glück zu tragen.

conflicts roughly with traditional methods; and Faust in rebuking the narrow formalism of Wagner utters the faith of the *Sturm und Drang* enthusiasm.\* And when in scornful despair Faust curses his passing dream of a more beauteous life, the hidden *Geisterchor* chants, as did the inner self of man :

Now we sweep	Wir tragen
The wrecks into nothingness !	Die Trümmer ins Nichts
Fondly we weep	Und klagen [hinüber,
The beauty that's gone !	Ueber die verlorene Schöne.
Thou, 'mongst the sons of	Mächtiger
earth,	Der Erdensöhne,
Lofty and mighty one,	Prächtiger,
Build it once more !	Baue sie wieder,
In thine own bosom the lost	In deinem Busen baue sie
world restore.†	auf !

But the common multitude cannot at once follow such counsel. Left to itself, it can only lose its grief in different kinds of intoxication. It is only when the party in Auerbach's cellar has been transported by his wines that Mephistopheles can say that now the race is free and happy; and before departing he tells Faust to notice how bestiality will immediately reveal itself.‡ Only the ever-striving can work out their own salvation. When

\* Wenn ihr's nicht fühlt, ihr werdet's nicht erjagen,  
Wenn es nicht aus der Seele dringt,  
Und mit urkräftigem Behagen,  
Die Herzen aller Hörer zwingt, etc.

† Miss Swanwick's translation, p. 52.

‡ *Mephisto.* Das Volk is frei, seht an wie wohl's ihm geht !

*Faust.* Ich hätte Lust nun abzufahren.

*Mephisto.* Gib nur erst Acht, die Bestialität  
Wird sich gar herrlich offenbaren.

Faust has striven to the end, the Angels of Heaven lift him up singing, "whoever aspires unweariedly is not beyond redemption."\*

Faust as a whole is styled a tragedy; and such it is in deepest truth, since at the end of incessant efforts to work out his salvation the hero has to confess, what at the outset he had been able to spell out for himself in the Fourth Gospel,—*"Im Anfang war die That."*† In the last stage of his career, before the intervention of heaven deprives Mephistopheles of his reward, Faust is discovered to be engaged in the undertakings of material civilisation. It is, indeed, exaltation at the prospect of carrying out the last drainage-work necessary to reclaim a piece of land for human use, which induces the utterance of the words appointed to declare his doom:—

Yes! to this thought I hold with firm persistence;  
The last result of wisdom stamps it true:  
He only earns his freedom and existence,  
Who daily conquers them anew.  
Thus here, by dangers girt, shall glide away  
Of childhood, manhood, age, the vigorous day.  
And such a throng I fain would see,—  
Stand on free soil among a people free!  
Then dared I hail the Moment fleeing:  
"Ah still delay,—thou art so fair!"†

\* Wer immer strebend sich bemüht,  
Den können wir erlösen.

† Bayard Taylor's translation.

Ja! diesem Sinne bin ich ganz ergeben;  
Das ist der Weisheit letzter Schluss:  
Nur der verdient sich Freiheit wie das Leben,  
Der täglich sie erobern muss.  
Und so verbringt, umrungen von Gefahr,  
Hier Kindheit, Mann, und Greis sein tüchtig Jahr.

Thus on one side the solution of the tragic conflict of the eighteenth century is nineteenth-century progress. But the drama contains a tragedy within itself,—the episode of Gretchen,—which manifests the limitations and disasters which surround the individual on this earth. In the Prologue in Heaven, however, the Lord had declared, “es irrt der Mensch, so lang’ er strebt;” and the hero passes through the incident at the cost of weariness only. Faust lives to appreciate the efforts which inferior souls like Wagner persistently make in behalf of a dimly-seen service to humanity. In the second part of the poem Wagner is found to be still pursuing his studies; and Mephistopheles discovers him in his laboratory in the act of fabricating Homunculus. Now Homunculus becomes Faust’s guide in the regions of ancient Greece, and is no other than the product of laborious study in the cold atmosphere of the Gothic North. In Greece Faust finds Helena, the ideal of ancient art, and from their union springs Euphorion, the child of the Middle Ages and classic culture. The wondrous child disappears in the form of Byron, but, as Mr. Coupland says in his interesting lectures, “if we search for the fruit of the blending of antiquity and the Middle Age, the full ripe bloom of modern poetry, there is none worthy to be so specified but Goethe himself.” \*

Solch ein Gewimmel möcht’ ich sehn,  
Auf freiem Grund mit freiem Volke stehn.  
Zum Augenblicke dürft’ ich sagen:  
Verweile doch, du bist so schön!

\* *Spirit of Goethe's Faust*, p. 272.

It is indeed evident that in the drama of Faust, along with so many other things, Goethe expressed his own idea of self-culture. Goethe, like Faust, was bent on acquiring experience and knowledge co-extensive with that of humanity: like Faust he aimed at attaining to harmony of soul with reality. Like Faust, too, he went forth in his quest without seeking a like enrichment of his moral character. Mephistopheles is just so much of a devil as every acute and vigorous man carries in his heart; and Goethe always forces us to conceive of him as Faust's other self, which was necessarily present and operative in every phase of the changeful history. In his own participation in both sides of human nature lies the explanation of the reverence which Goethe commands, and the antipathy which he excites, among men who are closely attached to the first conditions of human society. It is impossible not to honour his ideal of complete manhood: it would be blindness to disregard the almost brutish aspect which his erotic inclinations gave to part of his life. But Mephistopheles confessed once for all that he thought upon the Fair in the plural; \* and in Goethe's own life and work this very important side of human life was either imperfectly represented or misrepresented altogether. The fault is a grave shortcoming in a writer of Goethe's aspirations; and Herder might well say in a letter concerning *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre* that he could tolerate neither in life nor in art the sacrifice of moral existence to what one calls

\* Ich sage Fraun; denn ein für allemal  
'Denk' ich die Schönen im Plural.

talent.\* Likewise was it with Goethe's relation to political life. He also had no sense for popular liberties, no perception of the indirect benefits surrounding all kinds of self-government. It was his opinion that "the poor people must always carry the bag, and whether on the right side or the left is pretty indifferent."† In his view political conflict was only detrimental to tranquil self-culture. He placidly accepted Napoleon's pretensions; and his heedless demeanour during the time of insurrection has never been forgiven by the most admiring of his countrymen. But when these limitations have been admitted, Goethe's steadfast purpose of making life a work of art, and art a work of law, still affords an instructive experiment in complete living.

Goethe first clearly conceived his purpose of self culture when he deserted the maid of Sessen-

\* Quoted by Julian Schmidt: *loc. cit.*, I. 471.

† See Duntzer: *Life of Goethe*, translated by Lyster, I. 419. In discharging his administrative duties, however, Goethe appears to have followed the antifeudal views which Lothario expresses in *Wilhelm Meister*. "How!" said Werner; "You would rather that our lands which we purchased free from burden, had been taxable?" "Yes," replied Lothario, "in a suitable degree. It is only by this equality with every other kind of property, that our possession of it can be made secure. In these new times, when so many old ideas are tottering, what is the grand reason why the peasant reckons the possession of the noble less equitable than his own? Simply that the noble is not burdened, and lies a burden on him." "But how would the interest of our capital agree with that?" said Werner. "Perfectly well," returned the other, "if the state, for a regular and fair contribution, would relieve us from the feudal hocus-pocus; would allow us to proceed with our lands according to our pleasure," etc.—*Carlyle's translation*, Book viii., ch. 11.



heim, with whom he had exchanged the vows of a first manly love. Whether he believed that Frederika Brion was not sufficiently in accord with his own aspirations, or whether he feared to fetter his activity by the restraints of marriage, certain it is that on this occasion he acted on his belief in what he owed to his own nature. During the first ten years in Weimar he was occupied partly with amusing his patron the Duke, partly with the duties of administration, and partly with studies in physical science. His literary production was inconsiderable; but all the time the original impulses of his genius were deepening and transforming themselves till, when at last he fled to Italy for the sake of instruction and self-composure, he left Weimar, not, as he had entered it, the poet of *Götz* and *Werther*, but as a seeker for more abiding forms of artistic excellence than were within the reach of untaught youth. With him he took in incipient shape, *Iphigenia* and *Tasso*,—sure tokens of the solution he was pursuing. In Italy he spent nearly two years in studying works of art, associating with painters and sculptors, and endeavouring vainly to become proficient in drawing. He returned to Weimar, convinced of the perfection of classic forms, completely estranged from his old conceptions, and from the woman whose affection had been the support of his period of probation.

Goethe's change of purpose quite outstripped the wants of the German people. Continually he had to lament the fact, which the Manager in *Faust* puts before the poet, that a finished whole is only

torn to pieces by the public. And when he and Schiller afterwards attacked the prevailing tastes with the *Xenien*, the somewhat undignified proceeding was fully justified by the precarious position which high artistic aims held in popular estimation. As his new views took possession of him Goethe found that his influence was in danger of being forfeited to this very friend, who at that time was of himself celebrating the stage of emotion which followed that of *Götz* and *Werther*. Schiller was ten years younger than Goethe, and his life from childhood had been filled, not with sentimental dissatisfaction at the general conditions of society, but with keen personal suffering from the political despotism and civil distinctions of the smaller German states. Schiller was brought up under the tutelage of the Duke of Würtemberg, a ruler who had parodied Louis XIV. by silencing his suppliant estates with the assurance that he was the Fatherland.\* Personal liberty Schiller only obtained when by flight he became an outlaw; and during his years of struggling authorship he enjoyed no leisure, no solvency, and no intercourse with more mature minds. When, therefore, his glowing feelings sought an outlet and a vocation in dramatic composition, it was not in forms of art, but in scenes of fiery passion against tyranny and injustice. In *Die Räuber* he held up for admiration a vagabond lawless life in the Bohemian woods; in *Fiesco* the government of a republic. In both plays despotism stood accursed; while in *Kabale and Liebe* the distinctions of caste and the vices

\* Cf. above, p. 36.

of the courts were led forth to condemnation. In *Don Carlos* the destructive and satirical tendency gives way to positive hopes for the amelioration of human nature and institutions; but the first requirements of a work of art are still unfulfilled, and only in the measure of his verse does his desire to reach a higher style appear.\* Now, however, Schiller passed through a process of reflection and ripening like that which Goethe himself had undergone. What life at Weimar and scientific investigation had done for the one, the study of history, philosophy, and ancient literature did for the other. In 1789 Schiller was appointed professor of history at Jena by help of Goethe, who nevertheless still feared that he was likely to deprave the public taste. Five years later, Goethe discovered that he and his younger rival were at one in their artistic aspirations.

The comradeship of Goethe and Schiller is always regarded as one of the most remarkable personal incidents in the history of literature. To those also, who care to trace in individuals the logical outcome of society's moods, it affords a signal example of that action of social conditions on great men, and of great men on current ideals, in which consists much of humanity's advance in spiritual culture. Both Goethe and Schiller began their careers by reproducing and heightening the deeper feelings of their countrymen. Both represented a revulsion from the existing state of things, and a yearning for an order more grateful to Germany's awakening needs. But neither could directly

\* Cf. Hettner : *loc. cit.* p., 385.

modify external conditions, and both were compelled to follow the general tendency to seek consolation in the world of imagination. Now Goethe and Schiller, when the impetuosity of youth was spent, saw with regret that their early productions were without form, and incapable of satisfying the matured intellect. They felt that if art was to be to them a self-sufficient world it would have to be controlled by laws of its own. Hence the initial belief in the close connection of true poetry with national life and genius came to be abandoned in behalf of an insulated conception of art. Schiller went the length of maintaining against Herder that it was no sufficient reason for seeking poetic material in northern mythology because thereby German peculiarities in thought and language could fully be retained; and he declared that the poet must withdraw beyond the boundaries of the real world, and form a sphere for himself, by becoming "through the Greek myths the kinsman of a distant, strange and ideal age." \* By 1805 Goethe, though willing to concede that in relation to his country and time Shakespeare was blameless enough, judged Shakespeare's works to be but "barbarische Avantage" when compared with those of the ancients; and several years earlier, he had spoken of Gothic architecture, the wonder of his youth, in terms of the utmost scorn. This change of purpose reached its most whimsical expression when Schiller, in his anxiety to retain Greek forms in modern art, seriously

\* Letter to Herder, Nov. 4, 1795. Cf. Letter to the hereditary Prince of Augustenberg, 1793

thought of putting the police in the place which Fate occupies in Hellenic tragedy.\*

To determine the intrinsic merit of the works produced under these circumstances, is a problem for literary critics. For the general historian it is sufficient to know that while they thus became poets for all time, Goethe and Schiller did not withdraw themselves entirely from immediate contact with their generation. The latter, indeed, never lost his position of great German patriotic poet, though artistic excellence became the first object in his own mind. By his *Wallenstein*, Schiller inspired Germans with that trust in themselves which the possession of a tragedy in the great style must ever awaken in a sensitive people; and in *Wilhelm Tell* he openly returned to his original theme of freedom, and presented it again in a more enduring and ennobling form. His strenuous efforts to explicate the theory and influence of art, were also not without effect on the minds of his countrymen; but in this matter he could achieve less than his older, more cultured, and longer lived friend. Goethe's works confessedly possess far more of the eternal elements of poetry than do Schiller's; and, though they were less national, and of less immediate historical significance, they were the means of presenting a more lasting lesson than any which Schiller had to teach. Goethe's idea of self-culture, lost though it was in excessive reverence for classical models, was at bottom in accord with the deepest tendencies of the German race. Since in modern times life and

\* See Hettner : II. pp. 190, 276, 553.

light have again found access to the German mind, the thought of an universal culture, co-extensive with the capacities of humanity, has been its peculiar aim and motive. Hence the cosmopolitan character of German ideals is only the distinctive feature of the national intellect. This tendency Goethe more than any other man helped to extend, enlighten, and direct; and when Germans honour him as a poet for all the world, they do but pay homage to him as the most splendid representative of their guiding principle of self-development.

x x  
That it is the special vocation of the German people to elucidate and realise the richest and most universal elements of civilisation, has been claimed again and again by Germans themselves. During the period here reviewed Fichte had asserted as much and more in his *Reden*, which were delivered in the winter 1807-8. "It is you," he cried to the German nation, "to whom, out of all other modern nations, the germs of human perfection are especially committed, and on whom the foremost place in the onward advance towards their development is conferred. If you sink to nothing in this, your peculiar office, then with you the hopes of Humanity for salvation out of all its evils are likewise overthrown."\* Although Carlyle has handed down to us a melancholy account of English delusions about things German, in the early part of this century; it is not necessary to resort to Madame de Staël for independent confirmation of Fichte's view. In the earlier part of his career Dr. Thomas Young, the

\* *The Popular Works of Fichte*, translated by Smith: I. 157.

originator of the undulatory theory of light, who was certainly the most talented and acute thinker of his day, studied at Göttingen, and took the opportunity of seeing something of the German land and people in 1797. He acknowledged that "in the learned world the great majority are mere mechanical labourers;" that the "established custom of the booksellers, who pay every ordinary writer exactly in proportion to the number of sheets, and at their periodical fairs exchange bulk for bulk of every kind of publication, is the grand impediment,—among those who subsist in part by writing,—to the laconic efforts of a brilliant genius, and the cause that the innumerable and ever-increasing heap of volumes envelopes from day to day more and more the sciences which it is designed to illustrate." But he returned home thinking "Germany at present the most interesting country to a traveller of any in Europe; not so much from its original merit, but from its being a kind of compendium of every thing that is excellent, and every thing that is remarkable in every country existing." \*

The first social result of the German literary revival was to throw the world of letters open to the whole nation. Literature passed from being the possession of a learned class to be the common property of all intelligent citizens. In the course of its higher development it threatened to revert to an exclusive sphere. With Goethe and Schiller it undoubtedly tended to confine itself to a select circle of cultured minds, as formerly it had confined

\* *Memoir of Dr. Thomas Young*, by Peacock : pp. 108, 114.

itself to pedants. A special counterinfluence to this danger was exerted by a writer who dwelt in the most unconventional, yet withal homely, fashion on the theme of humanity which the two Weimar poets treated in rigid high-wrought forms. Jean Paul Richter cannot be ranged in any definite position in the development of German literature, but his writings with their wisdom, their genial humour, and kindly feeling, treating of all things, even the most lowly, from the standpoint of the natural man, greatly helped to keep the literature of power down to the plane of ordinary existence ; and hence some historians have been led to regard him as the complement to the classical poets, that is, as a classical writer himself. But most helpful in preserving the connection of literature with the nation were the general circumstances attending the revival. The most striking feature of literary biography at this time, is the great number of resourceless youths who managed to exist with their measure of talent on the patronage of the public. From the troubles of Winckelmann and Lessing, this fact constantly attests the demand for original literature, the earnestness of its professors, and the spread of ambition throughout German society. On the other hand, the new race of writers surpassed the old school both in social consideration and knowledge of the world. One of Frederick's best reasons for contemning German books was the cramped circumstances and experience of German authors. But the new aspirants were able by the vigour of their purpose, their own merits, and the growing sympathy of their countrymen, to assert for



themselves an honourable social position; while their enterprising spirit led them to seek the advantages of travel at a time when much knowledge, which in these days can be obtained at one's door, was only to be gained by making arduous journeys. In the space of fifty years, literature succeeded in linking together with its slender bonds every grade of German society. The only disadvantage thus involved, was the proneness of the upper middle class to gain another step on the nobility, by claiming the licence of polite rank in moral conduct. Of course, from the point of view of common humanity, the approach of noble to burgher and of burgher to peasant, of Prussian to Bavarian, of Saxon to Rhinelander, was still very restrained; but, viewed in relation to the past, it marked all the difference between the forlorn and the hopeful.

Hence, along with the main stream of literary development flowed a large volume of popular literature, which seldom failed to be connected with the principal current. It was now that in Germany novels, chiefly of very inferior character, began to dispense on all sides their pitiful renderings of the higher intellectual life of the time. But what substance the numberless imitations of *Pamela*, *Sir Charles Grandison* and *Tristram Shandy*, of *Werther*, *Götz* and *Die Räuber*, contained, was infinitely better presented to the public in the drama. This was the most influential period of the German stage. When mental activity was coming into vigour, and neither newspapers nor public business afforded matter of general interest, the citizens resorted to

the theatre to participate in the ideas and feelings which were passing through the nation. Here they first made acquaintance with the masterpieces of their time; and were given by superior actors representations of Shakespeare's works, carefully adapted to their capacities. Here they received plenteous doses of chivalry and robber plays, and looked upon the dramas of middle class life, or parodies of fate-tragedy. At the same time they were often diverted by Kotzebue's purposeless inventions. But most frequently they found their amusement in something germane to their higher wants. If chivalry or robber plays proved tiresome, resource was again had to burgher plays, in which the chord of social dissatisfaction was still harped upon; for though Schroeder and Iffland were far weaker men than Lessing, they did not lack a sense of the divisions, corruptness, and immorality which the prevailing social system contained. Indeed, taste for the theatre sometimes became a belief that the stage was the only sphere in which a humble burgher could unfold his potentialities. Viewed with regard to historical facts, Goethe's choice of scene for *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre*, which now seems almost childish, is only the expression of a train of reasoning very natural in those days. As *Faust* is the best comment on the dynamical condition, so this novel is the best interpreter of the statical condition of German society at the time; and Meister's singular letter to Werner, announcing his decision to go on the stage, is doubtless an accurate account of the illusions and sophistries into which an aspiring

young burgher of weak character would be likely to fall.\*

To adduce further evidence of the depth and breadth of the literary movement, it would be necessary to advert to growths which are properly characteristic of a later period. In painting, sculpture, and music, however, new sources of vigour were attained by a process nearly parallel with that observable in literary art. By the middle of the eighteenth century European painting had sunk to a very low level. The genre school of Holland had come to an end, and the purpose of the eclectic school of Bologna had long been exhausted. In France the traditions of Watteau were carried on by his disciples till the Revolution proscribed all luxury and refinement; and Fragonard, the last of the dainty triflers, died in poverty in 1805. In Germany a brave effort to form a new starting point was beginning to issue in failure. Old Ismael Mengs, shocked by the decay of art, had given his eldest son the name of Raphael, and sought, by strenuous labour and assiduous study of the best work of the past, to train him to be the regenerator of painting. But Raphael Mengs, though he faithfully reproduced all that his father could impart to him, proved incapable of supplying the creative power which was necessary to form of the materials at hand an art adequate to modern wants. For a time his fame was high and wide, and his influence helped to impress on his brethren the lessons which Winckelmann drew from the antique. When, however, the urgings of storm and stress began to

\* Book V., ch. iii.

touch the painters, the art of Mengs did nothing to appease their dissatisfaction. As in literature, Shakespeare's might and unrestraint compelled unintelligent reverence, so in painting, Michael Angelo's kindred qualities extorted coarse and absurd imitation. But the extravagances in pictorial art, unlike those in literature, came to nothing ; and they secure remembrance only in the nickname of a *Sturm und Drang* poet, the painter Teufels-Müller.

That in the imitative arts the classical goal was not to be reached by the method of Mengs was decisively proved by David, who studied under Vien at the French Academy in Rome, when the return to the antique was in its most servile phase. David endeavoured to reproduce antique art in faultlessness of draughtmanship, fitness of composition, and severity of execution, with all the success which rigorous study of models and natural conditions could ensure. But his mind was that of a man who could be painter to Louis XVI., and yet one of his executioners ; the introducer of appropriate costume on the stage, yet superintendent of grotesque republican pageants. His pictures entirely fail in charm and harmony of intuition, and the subtler conditions of artistic excellence ; and the surrender of him and his school to the service of militant imperialism attests the lack of those deeper feelings which are necessary to produce lasting works of art for modern life.

But Carstens, who never gained complete technical training, and never produced any considerable work, approached the great works of the past

as neither imitator nor eclectic had done before him. Having steeped himself in the spirit of the antique, he viewed nature under its influence with a powerful and original mind. Mere mechanical dexterity was not then the want. This at least the anxious copyists had developed to a satisfactory degree. What Carstens had to enforce was the fact, as he himself said in reference to an exhibition of the French Academy in Rome, that art is the language of feeling, which begins where words end, that it is concerned with the sensuous representation of ideas, and is a delight for reasoning men and not for fools. Carstens did not attain to his full conceptions till he reached Rome, where he spent five years. He was then overtaken by death, and he left behind him little but drawings and sketches. But Rome was at that time the resort of all earnest artists of the North. There his influence, notwithstanding detraction from some quarters, made a lasting impression on the rising talent. Koch, Schick, and Wächter, handed on his initiative in painting so far as their measure of talent permitted, and thus formed the basis of the German school which Cornelius led in the next generation to a national and European position.

When Carstens was in Rome Canova was producing the works which contemporaries believed to be worthy of being ranged among ancient marbles. Opinions may vary as to the success with which Canova returned to nature and the best models, but there is no doubt that his statues were greatly marred by allegiance to the taste of polite society at that time. Though he brought modern Italian

sculpture into repute again, he has little claim to be regarded as an historical initiator, and still less as a national genius. Now Thorwaldsen, who was fortunate enough to reach Rome in time to enjoy a whole year's constant intercourse with Carstens,—a year, too, at the formative period of his life,—obtained no popularity by voluptuous or theatrical effects. He remained true to the severe and lofty ideal of the Greeks because, like our less profound Flaxman, he contemplated it with the depth and self-restraint of the northern temperament, with the singleness of heart of unsophisticated genius. His fame of greatest sculptor of the time was the celebration of a capability of reverting to the Hellenic spirit, which in another way the classical German poets had claimed for modern Gothic culture. Thorwaldsen was by birth a Dane, and Carstens was a native of Schleswig; but their spiritual nationality and their sources of cultivation were the same as those of Herder and Goethe. Dannecker, on the other hand, the school-fellow of Schiller, who did most of his work in Stuttgart, forfeited by his approach to Canova the position of representative German sculptor at this period, which his national reputation seemed to imply. It is not a little remarkable that Schinkel, the architect of the Theatre, the Old Museum, and the Academy of Architecture, at Berlin, seemed in the early part of his career to think more of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance than of the ancient world. In his youth he was much influenced by Gilly, who was at once an enthusiast for Greek forms and one of the first to do justice to Gothic

architecture; and Schinkel's return to ancient models was not the base imitation then common over all Europe, only because he reached through modern freedom a true-felt version of Hellenic style.\*

Music is the most insulated of the fine arts, and for this reason the least characteristically national. It comes into direct contact with no department of human life, though it can set in vibration every chord of the human heart; and its medium is a language common to all civilised men, its themes are communicable within wide ranges of culture, and its achievements are attained more by spontaneous talent than by force of circumstances. In primitive stages music is the naïve expression of a people's naïvest self; but in its higher forms it is rare for a Handel to give the classical stamp to a Britain's musical capacity, or for a Bach to render into consummate works the motives of his unsophisticated countrymen. And of the two great composers of Germany during this time one at any rate is more remarkable as a psychological phenomenon and inspired genius than as a product of antecedents, or an exponent of general history. Mozart is a wonder of the period, a fact which cannot be unravelled. Yet his works are formed with the surest regard for the rules of art, with an unerring sense for beauty of detail and beauty of relation. He possessed an inexhaustible fund of melody, perfect command over all contrapuntal devices, and equal familiarity with all forms of music from the symphony and mass to the canzonet.

\* Hettner : II. 477.

He appeared at a time when instrumental music had passed from the artless, disconnected melodies of the dance, and the severe counterpoint of the fugue, to the grand cyclic forms of modern art, the offspring of the suites. The inception of the sonata and the symphony belongs to the middle of the eighteenth century, and their development was the work of Haydn, who also published the first string quartett in 1755. Mozart succeeded in informing with his genius the various types of musical expression ; and he realised Gluck's theory of opera,—the theory which organically united libretto and music into a single intense dramatic representation,—in a manner which was denied alike to Gluck's limited intuition and contrapuntal ignorance. It was this conjunction of individual creativeness with artistic form, of fine instinct with technical mastery, which caused Goethe to say that Mozart was the composer, and Don Giovanni the model for the ideal setting of *Faust*.

If Mozart is the most gifted interpreter of the groundwork on which modern music rests, it is Beethoven who by common consent is the true representative in the poetry of sound of the historical period on which the present Europe is based.

X / Among great musicians Beethoven was of slow development ; and perhaps it was this circumstance that enabled him to reflect so well the passions and aspirations of the time he lived in. He, the Rhineland, says Hettner, had imbibed the culture of French and German enlightenment ; Klopstock was the guide of his youth : Shakespeare, Goethe, and Schiller were the favourite poets of his man-



hood ; while the spirit of the French Revolution filled his whole soul with a fervid yearning for political freedom and human dignity. By his immense individual force he enlarged the scope and deepened the purpose of musical forms : through his intimate sympathy with the times he gave them a content which touches modern minds as no music of an earlier age can. In him the struggle, which his works expressed, was enhanced by a gloomy disposition and physical misfortune. Yet he remained true to the spirit of his age, and in his titanic efforts to overcome the strife pushed the bounds of his art almost beyond the line of all possible art. It was a time when a richer substance was required to be given to musical art, as had been given to literary art. Such compositions as the overture to the *Zauberflöte* or the *Jupiter Symphony* fill us with the same pure and perfect pleasure as we get from contemplating any other type or idea of absolute beauty ; but they suggest no direct emotion and present our imagination with no picture. On the other hand, the *Pastoral Symphony*, in spite of its composer's caution, is essentially picturesque, and the *Allegretto* of its successor, the great *Symphony in A*, calls up a volume of feelings which are none the less real because they want definiteness. "*Sonate que veux-tu ?*" was a pertinent question in the days of Haydn and Mozart : it would have been an unmeaning flippancy in the time of Beethoven. The counterpoint of the Bonn master is almost puerile beside that of his great predecessor, but if music be what Berlioz called it, "*l'art d'émouvoir*

les hommes intelligents," there is only one man in its whole history who can challenge his right to the first place among composers. And by his gift of chamber music Beethoven conferred on society a benefit equal to the boon bestowed by Handel when he added to the music for church and theatre the elastic programme of the concert with its derivative amateur institutions. The pianoforte dates from the middle of the eighteenth century. It was indeed nothing but the application of percussion action to the spinet and harpsichord; but compared with these it yielded a measureless range of musical expression. This instrument, the use of which was within the capacity of all private people, Beethoven first vested with its full dignity, profundity, and versatility; and in so doing he deepened and enriched in an unique degree the purest pleasures of home life.\*

\* The introduction of the clarinet into the orchestra made about this time a great change in instrumentation. Though invented about 1690 by Denner, it does not appear in scores till Haydn and Mozart. The marvellous alteration in orchestral colouring thus effected by the new position of the wood-wind instruments is to be seen,—to mention only random examples,—in Mozart's E<sup>b</sup> Symphony, the overture to Weber's Freischütz, and Spohr's concerti.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### NATURALISM AND THE REVOLUTION IN ENGLISH LITERATURE.

" O ye loud Waves! and O ye Forests high!  
And O ye Clouds that far above me soared!  
Thou rising Sun! Thou blue rejoicing Sky!  
Yea, everything that is and will be free!  
Bear witness for me, whereso'er ye be,  
With what deep worship I have still adored  
The Spirit of divinest Liberty.  
When France in wrath her giant-limbs upreared,  
And with that oath, which smote earth, air, and sea,  
Stamped her strong foot and said she would be free,  
Bear witness for me how I hoped and feared! "

*S. T. Coleridge.*

IN England, during the latter part of the eighteenth century, the same general causes, as those which obtained in Germany, were operating to evoke new developments in literature. Here also the expansion of society promoted the diffusion of letters and the independence of authorship. Johnson had been able to give a final blow to the practice of patronage, though Adam Smith still had reason to speak of writers as that "unprosperous race," and Crabbe had yet to find in Burke a generous benefactor. Here, too, the influence of France, by concentrating attention on elegance and correctness of style, had produced ideals and work which could not satisfy the feelings and

aspirations of a ruder and more natural public. Yet literature in England was still English. Pope, the master of the superfine school of taste, was also a master of his generation in ideas; and when the culture of town wits ceased to embody the intellectual capacity of the nation, literature was not to be classed as an alien craft because its recent development happened to have been characterised by overpowering solicitude for artificial forms and conventionalised figures.

In prose fiction the wants of a more robust public had already been met by work of first rate excellence. The translations and imitations of French romances had been superseded by the true novel of life. Richardson published *Pamela*, and Fielding published *Joseph Andrews*, in 1741-2; and *Tom Jones* and *Clarissa Harlowe* appeared within the next ten years. Now the novel was born as a work of art because it was produced as an imaginative study of natural truth; and one reason why this was possible was because prose fiction had been left unencumbered by rules of taste. Such freedom was in some sort due to the novel's reputed inferiority of status. Yet the circumstances of its immediate attainment to artistic merit and social importance yielded a lesson to the method of poetry itself. Poetry, indeed, even within its own self-restricted sphere, was verging on exhaustion. The art of elegance and arbitrary rule did not admit of infinite elaboration; and when Pope had given his version, little was left for other writers to achieve, though what had been done was so far from being a barren performance that without it later poetry would not

have been possible. Thus if the secret of fashioning couplets in artificial diction on conventionalised subjects had been imparted to every one possessed of a facility for versification,—and accordingly in many circles such verses were lavishly offered at the shrine of culture,—no space existed under the accepted limitations within which original genius might unfold itself. In pictorial art the English mind had recently contended with some success against equally false traditions from abroad; and though in this sphere it had started under a load of preconceptions, guided only by the study of Italian old masters, it had at once instinctively followed the style most congruous with the national genius as manifested in the novel. If, therefore, a new field was required for poetry, it must lie, as seemed most probable, in the same direction, in the regions of realism and actual life.

The habit of mind which had favoured the pursuit of correctness in poetry was, however, closely connected with the desire of the age to take things as they were, without hazarding extravagances in any quarter. The same motive, which induced a spirit of compromise in philosophical and theological disputation, urged men to defend the activity of their imaginations from meanness or excess by agreeing upon a narrow code of literary taste. Such aims were reasonable enough after the experiences of the preceding period; but they were necessarily of a temporary character. All compromises rest on principles, of which, sooner or later, some obtain ascendancy and issue in radical change; and those in England of last century

ultimately resolved themselves into tendencies of very decided character.

In the sphere of religion, dislike of extravagance was especially strong. Among the faithful and the sceptics alike reigned aversion from extreme conclusions and intense feeling. A horror of enthusiasm dominated spiritual teachers; and the idolatry of sound sense, with its offerings of moralising sermons, occupied for many years the established altars. But a generation grew up which knew not the ugly aspect of religious zeal, which was unaffrighted by visions of fanaticism. Large classes arose who had lost consciousness of the strifes of their ancestors, and had not been retained by culture in the groove of worldly indifference. To these people the religion of prudential equilibrium had no meaning. It reached no deeper part of their nature than did allocutions from the magistrate's bench. It did not touch their religious consciousness, even to harden it, but left it slumbering in total seclusion. When, therefore, the Methodist movement proceeded from Oxford to address the nation at large, when the all-pervading presence of the Deity was insisted upon, and the reality of the religious life within was appealed to; when every thought, motive, and action was declared to have a relation to religion, and the true kingdom of God was shown to be a state of the soul; when, too, men's minds were bewildered by the fancies of vulgar enthusiasm, by the hopes and fears begotten of a confused belief in the depravity yet spirituality of human nature, in the nearness yet separateness of the Almighty,—then the policy of sound sense,

the lukewarmness of the Church, and the worldliness of its ministers, were found to have concealed a great void in the life of the people. A time came when the Church itself was touched by the spirit of earnestness. Some of the zeal of Methodism passed into it, and some of the passion of rivalry stirred its enthusiasm. Yet the improvement was due not solely to the work of Whitefield and the Wesleys, but in part to the same causes which had produced the Methodist movement. The Church also experienced in its own behalf the need of truer and intenser ideals, and sank of its own accord not a little practical worldliness in solicitude for the real interests of immortal souls. In like manner, if the first poet to abandon the artificial method was a religious hypochondriac and a Methodist scorner of life in towns and polite society, he was also the spokesman of a feeling which demanded a more natural content and a less constrained form in literature.

As a matter of biography it would appear that Cowper would never have been an original poet unless he had suffered from insanity, and his insanity had taken a religious form from the revivalism of the day. Owing to this misfortune he found an asylum among tender and pious friends, where his feeble nature could luxuriate in the homely and rural delights of uneventful living which his poetry was to present to the world as a new revelation of itself. The writing of poetry was recommended to him by these friends in order to defend his mind from madness. But the work which established his fame, the work which made

him an originator, was prompted by one more conversant with the outside world. Newton and Mrs. Unwin encouraged Cowper to write hymns and moral satires; it was Lady Austen who suggested to him composition in blank verse on an unconventional subject. *The Task* was written by a "stricken deer that left the herd long since," when called to "dress a Sofa with the flow'rs of verse"; and its truth to nature's humblest features, its unconscious departure from that servitude to consequence which strung the literature of the century on a chain of "fors" and "therefores," its deliberate abandonment of the prevailing critical canons, were the results of a revulsion from current ideals, which sprang up in the seclusion of the Olney parlour under the stimulus of feminine vivacity. The great popularity of the poem was, no doubt, in great part due to its celebration of the hearth, and to its evangelical piety, in both of which respects it came into closest accord with the rising comfortable classes. It owed, however, not a little of its fame to the qualities which made Cowper to England what Rousseau was to France. That love of lowly realism, that feeling for nature and a rural life, that sympathy with the poor, even that religious introspection which corresponded to the morbid self-examination of the latter writer, were to a society, sound at the core, what Rousseau's naturalism was to a society corrupted throughout.

Though accurate to nature in her milder and more kindly aspects, Cowper's poetry failed to present in equal truthfulness the harsher features



even of the rustic life which he loved so well. "God made the country and man made the town," is an opinion which seems to have caused him to forget that the devil dwells in both. This defect of conception, a defect fatal to the artistic sufficiency of naturalism, was in some sort made good by Crabbe, who published his first work of importance, *The Village*, about the same time that *The Task* appeared. In Crabbe's unflinching descriptions of the grim side of common life, the art of realism never rises above prose; but the effect obtained by rigorously treating the sadder aspect of human existence "as Truth will paint it and as bards will not," even in couplets of inferior elegance, completed in good time the lesson which it was indispensable to learn before a new growth of poetry became possible.

Cowper wrote not for the world nor for critics, but simply to exercise the activity within him. This was the main reason why, invertebrate being though he was, he succeeded in initiating a return to the genuine sources of poetry. Two years after *The Task* was published there appeared in Kilmarnock a volume of poems by one who, according to his own confession, rhymed neither for spite, money, nor notoriety, but for fun. He, too, was a singer of feeble will; he, too, was pursued by a madness of his own, the madness of undisciplined passions. So far the peasant, Burns, corresponds with the gentleman, Cowper. Both poets, moreover, admired one another. Cowper's preference for "a manly rough line with a deal of meaning in it, rather than a whole poem of musical periods

that have nothing but their oily smoothness to recommend them," \* led him as closely towards the Scotch poet, as did his mild religion and homely feeling draw towards himself the singer of the *Cotter's Saturday Night*, and the satirist of the *Auld Lights*. But Burns did not serve his genius by abandoning his class. He remained true to his condition of sturdy, independent, peasanthood, though his tenderness, insight, and feeling for nature made him a poet. For this reason, while he shares with Cowper the same position in the movement which produced modern English poetry, he far transcends him in historical significance and abiding merit.

Burns was no nursling of middle-class comfort and religious solicitude, reared to exhibit that aspect of natural truth which fashion from the past and industrialism of the future seemed about to hide for ever. He was a true son of the soil, even of Ayrshire soil. In Germany men had to obtain their folksongs through collectors, their sentiment through foreign writers, their sedition from the French Revolution, their enthusiasm from youth, their awe from mystics, their earnestness from philosophers. In Britain the public received what they wanted of these elements direct from home-born genius. From Burns it received the best content, the most touching forms, of popular song; from him, the naïvest declaration of manhood's rights and dignity; from him, the lessons of country life and natural objects. On Scotland itself Burns conferred what

\* A similar opinion is expressed in his first publication, *Table Talk*, 1782.

Scotsmen can alone express. In general history he was one of the first influences to shape the Union into a bond of reciprocal service and respect. Scotch culture had been dominated by French forms and English fashions till, as Burns himself said, it spun thread so fine that it was fit for neither weft nor woof. Scottish memories were almost as lifeless as the Jacobite cause ; England's unreasoning dislike was accepted as part of the nature of things. Burns, who desired to do something "for puir auld Scotia's sake," did much to change all this, as did Scott in the next generation. In general history, again, Burns is conspicuous, in that he first united in British literature modern naturalism with the spirit of the Revolution. At first, gauger though he was, with wife and weans who "maun hae brose and brats o' duddies," dependent on his employment in the service of an affrighted government, he responded with incautious zeal to the revolutionary outburst. But when the French threatened to invade England, and the exciseman had become a volunteer, Burns' sedition conformed to the real condition of things ; and the verse which follows the well-known stanza on "the Kettle o' the Kirk and State," expressed very chastened sentiments.\*

- \* "The wretch that wad a tyrant own,  
 And the wretch his true-born brother,  
 Who would set the mob aboon the throne,  
 May they be damned together !  
 Who will not sing, 'God save the King !'  
 Shall hang as high 's the steeple ;  
 But while we sing 'God save the King,'  
 We'll ne'er forget the People."

✧ The union of naturalism with the revolutionary spirit is the key to the groundwork of modern British poetry. In Burns it found earliest expression because his genius was torn by a fierce conflict with animal passions and social jealousies. When it reappeared among English poets the Revolution itself had appealed directly to all minds; and naturalism had passed from spontaneous utterances of the simple-minded to the reasoned statements of self-conscious innovators. The early hopes of the French Revolution nowhere found purer or warmer faith than in the minds of those who were about to re-animate English poetry. Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge were sanguine youths when the outbreak took place; and each, according to the nature of his character, participated in the illusions and contumacy which the event produced. According to their dispositions, too, all three underwent the reaction excited by the progress of affairs in France. But on such minds the Revolution could not exert a most lively influence only to suffer complete negation. How far the effects of such an experience may have contributed to their subsequent development could be determined only by the most subtle of biographical studies. Evident it is that their sense of personal independence, and their lofty moral aims owed not a little to the elevation of mind obtained in youth from contemplating the prospect of a more generous social order; that their self-confidence and fearlessness of criticism were chastened and fortified by wrestling with consequent disillusion. "I maintained a strife," says Wordsworth in *The Excursion*,—

"Hopeless, and still more hopeless every hour ;  
But, in the process, I began to feel  
That, if the emancipation of the world  
Were missed, I should at least secure my own,  
And be in part compensated."

From Southey, the one of the three friends who possessed far the least genius and far the most faculty for literary production, enthusiasm for the Revolution received expression in *Joan of Arc* and *Wat Tyler*, the first results of his industry. Then he gradually became aware that human improvement is a tedious affair, and, while retaining his belief in the certainty and indefiniteness of progress, exchanged his Deism, Girondism and Pantisocracy, for the Anglican Church, the British Constitution, and the politics of the *Quarterly Review*. He never became a limpet on the rock of stability, though his conceptions of safe advance were in practice much hampered by excessive regard for the landed class. As a poet Southey wrote in his own style, which, in spite of occasional eccentricity, was free from inflation though rich in its redundancy, and he loyally adhered to his faith in the moralities ; but his best work in this direction did not raise him to the first rank either among those who realise or those who initiate, while the length and unequal merit of his most ambitious efforts, and his habit of choosing remote subjects, convicted him before the public of the charge made by his worst enemy, that his "epic mountains seldom fail in mice." His life is memorable rather as that of a trusty man of letters than as that of a man with a message. But for England to have at this time

a powerful biographer, historian, and essayist, who united the idea of constitutional order and the remembrance of revolutionary hope, was an advantage which has, perhaps, been too much overlooked.

x X In vehemence of revolutionary partisanship, Coleridge outstripped both his friends, and the recoil was proportionally more rapid and extreme. In his early poetry the ordeal has left its mark, but the best fruits of his genius, though still belonging to the first part of his career, are of a character which withhold them alike from common classification and direct connection with literary or general history. To lovers of poetry Coleridge is head of no school, the representative of no group or movement, but the writer of the *Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*. Yet he was closely concerned in erecting an ideal of naturalism; and his power of critical disquisition made him an instructor to all who addressed themselves seriously to the problems of poetic subjects and forms. In the sphere of ethics, religion, and philosophy, he was in the next generation to mediate between English utilitarianism and German transcendentalism. In the period here considered he came forth to preserve for the panic-stricken party of order the redeeming faith of the Revolution. Coleridge's conservatism was no craven dread of the doctrines of reason, nor was it a blind resort to prejudice and tradition. His function rather was to rescue reason from the wave of reaction, and to claim for it the authority of which bewildered Toryism had well-nigh lost sight. He sought, indeed, to give a reasoned account of what existed, and to

make good the distinctions in man's moral and spiritual nature. History, he knew, must be an intelligible development, and its last results as intelligible as those which had gone before. As an apologist for the past he was anti-revolutionary : as a believer in reason he advocated the policy of sober reform.

On the brooding and stubborn spirit of Wordsworth the Revolution made a profounder impression than on the minds of Southey and Coleridge. The import of the great event to rational spectators is recorded in his works more precisely and durably than in any other contemporary documents. But the steadfastness of his will and the stability of his intellect, the secluded habit of his life and the benignity of his disposition, render it impossible to trace any definite portion of his teaching to the influence of this early experience. It is certain, however, that reflection on the vicissitudes of France persuaded him that individuals may still wield great powers over their brethren, and heightened his belief in his own fitness to be a governor of men. As Coleridge was first of all an orator and preacher, so Wordsworth was a leader and moralist. The one missed the pulpit of Unitarian chapels, the rostrum of the lecture-room, and the vocation of the journalist, in which he was unequalled, to deliver monologues to the inquirers who came to Highgate. The other was saved from entering into public affairs to deliver to the world from his retirement at the lakes his theory of poetry and his criticism of life. The success of Coleridge, great as it seems, was

but the salvage from a wreck of the most brilliant qualities : that of Wordsworth was all that a strong and earnest nature, aided by the spiritual influence of Coleridge, could achieve against a vitiated public taste.

The contest was opened by the two friends together. "Our conversations," says Coleridge in the well-known Fourteenth Chapter of his *Biographia Literaria*, "turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry—the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination." They agreed to write a joint volume of poems, of which Coleridge should compose those concerned with incidents and agents in part at least supernatural or romantic, while Wordsworth was to contribute those of which "the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them when they present themselves." Thus originated the *Lyrical Ballads*, which contained at first the *Ancient Mariner*. At the time of publication Coleridge's splendid contribution attracted little attention, and its presence was only helpful in persuading seafaring men to buy the unsaleable volume. The critics ignored the weird ballad in their eagerness to ridicule Wordsworth's experiment, "whether subjects, which from their nature rejected the usual ornaments and extra-colloquial style of poems in general, might not be so managed in the language of ordinary life as to produce the



pleasurable interest which it is the peculiar business of poetry to impart."\* They concentrated all their attention on those portions of his venture which came into most direct conflict with their prepossessions, and which the poet's warmest admirers would fain withhold from an irreverent reader. They only appreciated the remaining tokens of his power sufficiently to induce them to throw a disproportionate amount of energy into their attacks. Wordsworth himself, with the determination of his character, accepted the conflict with calm self-confidence, and stubbornly adhered to his poetry in its baldest form. Conscious that he was withstanding ignorant criticism, and incapacitated by the effort of resistance from discriminating the merits of his work, he came to look upon all that he wrote as so much testimony to the truth. He composed a partial theory of his own practice, and while he constantly wrote poetry transcending the scope of his doctrine, he persistently rated all alike by the standard of his imperfect analysis.

In later years Wordsworth acknowledged that "it would certainly have been a great object to me to have reaped the profits I should have done from my writings but for the stupidity of Mr. Gifford and the impertinence of Mr. Jeffrey."†

\* In Wordsworth's language, "to ascertain, how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a Poet may rationally endeavour to impart."—*Prose Works*, II., 79.

† Conversation reported by Lady Richardson: *Prose Works*, III., 437.

But when he perceived that he was dealing with judges "whose censure is auspicious, and whose praise ominous," he laid his account for a protracted contest. The second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* was composed of Wordsworth's poems alone, and was accompanied by a long preface setting forth the author's aims and principles. "They who have been accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers," this preface confessed, "if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will, no doubt, frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness." In an Essay on Poetic Diction the writer even asserts that "in works of *imagination and sentiment*—for of these only have I been treating—in proportion as ideas and feelings are valuable, whether the composition be in prose or in verse, they require and exact one and the same language. Metre is but adventitious to composition, and the phraseology for which that passport is necessary, even where it may be graceful at all, will be little valued by the judicious." Notwithstanding admissions in a contrary sense, the Preface left on the minds of its readers a very crude realistic impression. Probably Wordsworth intended it should do so, in order to more effectually countervail the vicious canons of current criticism. His opinion on living writers of verse was less uncompromising, and he was well aware that Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* and similar compilations had helped many besides himself to proceed in the right direction, asserting, of the work mentioned, that the poetry of England "has

been absolutely redeemed by it." \* Of his own practice, moreover, he acknowledged in the preface itself, as has recently been overlooked, that his associations " must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that, consequently, giving to things a false importance, I may have sometimes written upon unworthy subjects."

Wordsworth's theory of poetry, therefore, had to suffer much elaboration and refinement before it became in any manner workable. In denouncing the conventional language of poets he fell into the opposite error, which, to use a simile of Sismondi, would lead a sculptor to clothe his statue with real instead of marble vestments. The necessary corrections and elucidation were provided by the appreciative criticism of Coleridge. Wordsworth's poems also, with their attendant trivialities and tiresomeness, had to be sifted. But this was done by readers for themselves, and, significantly enough for rule-of-thumb critics, with very various results. *The Idiot Boy*, and *Goody Blake*, for example, are generally regarded as cases of particular, instead of general, association; yet when Wordsworth sent Fox a copy of *Lyrical Ballads* in order that he might approve of the peasant type portrayed in *Michael* and *The Brothers*, the statesman wrote back complimenting the poet on the first-named pieces, and demurring to the use of blank verse in the poems especially brought under his notice. Coleridge mentions a like difference of opinion respecting *Alice Fell*, and testifies of the ballads that he had heard " at different times, and from different

\* *On Poetry as a Study: Prose Works*, II., 124.

individuals, every single poem extolled and reprobated, with the exception of those of the loftier kind." After better acquaintance with Wordsworth's works men came to see that if all were excluded from them "that a literal adherence to the theory of his preface would exclude, two-thirds at least of the marked beauties of his poetry must be erased;" and that feeling "a justifiable preference for the language of nature and good sense, even in its humblest and least ornamental forms, he suffered himself to express, in terms at once too large and exclusive, his predilection for a style the most remote possible from the false and showy splendour which he wished to explode."\*

Wordsworth's critical writings, in fact, even with Coleridge's help, would have achieved but little if they had not been supported and completed by his poetry. In following only the bold outlines of literary development it is unnecessary to notice the details of form and the subtler effects of genius; while to refer to the esoteric beauties and teaching, which the true Wordsworthian derives from everything written by his master, is here obviously impracticable. The lesson from Wordsworth, which in general history it is mainly important to record, is the poet's sense of the oneness of nature with man, and the glory he has shed on external appearances by viewing them in the light of this connection. The vulgar dualism of the eighteenth century, subverted by Kant in philosophy, Wordsworth dispassionately refuted by constantly dwelling on the intimations of a real

\* *Biographia Literaria*, Chaps. XIX., XX.

unity. At least his refutation was decisive so far as the higher literature of England was concerned ; and though it be the regret of his admirers that he is not properly known on the continent, it would perhaps be not impossible to trace an indirect influence from him, imparting more delicate perceptions to the outspoken pantheism which Goethe propagated. Instead of regarding nature as a cunning piece of mechanism, admirable in itself, and worshipful on account of a supposed cause ; instead of reflecting on nature's landscape as the mother and support of men, as the scene of life and the condition of adventure, dear for its bounties and romantic from its associations,—Wordsworth dwelt on the nature which is as much man's moral and intellectual existence as it is the ground of his physical life. He did not begin from man, and trace the features of his environment to his percipient mind. He concentrated his gaze on the external world itself, till it took on a new aspect and betrayed unnoticed relations to man's higher self. "Poems," he said, "to which any value can be attached, were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply." And in a letter written towards the end of his life, he spoke of the spirituality with which he had endeavoured to invest the material universe, and the moral relations under which he wished to exhibit its most ordinary appearances. Everything familiar to us he held to be proper subjects of the poet's art ; and he doubted not that if the scientific conceptions of

the Kosmos become perfectly familiarised to men, the poet will be ready to "aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man." That Wordsworth's view of nature and man will not bear statement in exact terms is, of course, evident. Wordsworth was no metaphysician; but he occupied a position between common sense and philosophic reason which forms a happy halting place for many sensitive minds by whom the grand problems of existence can be seen but vaguely by help of sensuous imagination.\*

Thus in Wordsworth English poetry arrived at truth to nature other than the mechanical and scientific conceptions which had been employed by Thomson and Darwin. It arrived, indeed, at what is distinctively poetic truth; for that only can be genuine poetry to man which is contemplated as much in relation to his own being as to the conditions of the universe. The principle may be

\* In his autobiographical poem Wordsworth wrote :—

"I felt that the array  
Of act and circumstance, and visible form,  
Is mainly to the pleasure of the mind  
What passion makes them; that meanwhile the forms  
Of nature have a passion in themselves,  
That intermingles with those works of man  
To which she summons him, although the works  
Be mean, have nothing lofty of their own;  
And that the Genius of the Poet hence  
May boldly take his way among mankind  
Wherever Nature leads; that he hath stood  
By Nature's side among the men of old,  
And so shall stand for ever."

*The Prelude*, Book. XIII.

called the naturalism of poetry, as opposed to the naturalism of science and conduct. If its acceptance in diction took different forms from what Wordsworth intended, its influence on the themes of poets was direct and enduring. Generally viewed, the new naturalism was a part of the revolutionary movement which displaced in modern life the tyranny of convention by the rule of realism. It was, in truth, realism of the most refined kind applied to the relations of man with nature. The relations of man to man were left untouched by it; and Wordsworth's treatment of morals differed not from that of the most regular didactic writers.

Now, much as literature had done to bring about the social and political revolution, there still remained two urgent functions for it to discharge. One was that of fortifying the more manly minds against reaction, and helping them to consolidate and extend the gains from the revolutionary movement. The other was to combat the return of convention's sway over the masters of European society. The first end was proper to all literature of worth; the second belonged to a somewhat peculiar class of writing. The new masters of society had risen by their own industry. For this reason they were in little danger of suffering from too great regard for prescriptive distinctions. Their ascendancy was moral and practical, not traditional. This circumstance involved dangers of its own. When men feel that their position depends on their moral and practical superiority, they strenuously endeavour to maintain the appearance of blameless respectability. Hence, being men of passions and weaknesses like those of

X the class they superseded, the middle class ran a risk of being over-solicitous for the semblance of right living, and too little heedful of the virtues of candour and sincerity. They were in danger of becoming subject to the convention of cant as their predecessors had been to the convention of birth. The danger was the more imminent because in the industrial life men's dealings are greatly affected by reputation, and it was the more formidable because the sansculottism of the early revolution had given a great incentive to hypocrisy without imparting a single ethical advantage to civilised life.

It is only by remembering the moral dangers which accompanied the industrial order of society, and by keeping in mind the political perils which reaction threatened in the days of the Holy Alliance, that it is possible to appreciate the work of Lord Byron. Viewed in connection with his own generation, he who was long regarded as the most immoral and reckless of modern poets, the head of Southey's Satanic school, appears to have been in fact a strong partisan on the side of moral health and social freedom. It is curious that the poet to do this for bourgeois Europe was born an aristocrat, and lived in excessive pride of his rank. Yet unless it had been so, Byron would hardly have felt that disregard of propriety, that distrust of respectable appearances, that love of revolt, which poverty, social disappointment, and riotous living engendered in his passionate and rebellious soul; and unless he had felt thus, he could not have flung with such effect his challenges to self-satisfied virtue,



nor have given equal encouragement to those who strove to complete the emancipation of European society. It was not only his tributes to liberty and assaults on tyranny which braced the minds of foreign readers. It was much more the contemplation in his characters of a gloomy indomitable spirit, fretting against the tedium of life but doomed to gnawing pain, craving knowledge but scorning obeisance, of a spirit like Manfred's, strong enough to be a hell unto itself, yet learning only that "'tis not so difficult to die;" of a spirit like Cain's, capable of aspiring to cheat death with death, yet succeeding only in drying "the fountain of a gentle race." And this spirit he set forth with such attraction for his generation because his own character and history had bred in him things which, as Landor said, were as strong as poison, and as original as sin. In like manner his outrages on domestic sentiment were only the tactics of a satirist who had the misfortune never to feel its sacred nature. Byron's heroes, even when they are invested with melodramatic interest by the imputation of surpassing guilt, are never protagonists of vice; and every criminal situation is the result, not of an attractive fatality, but of a fortuitous collocation of natural circumstances. If sin is committed, it immediately appears as hollow and ridiculous as anything else; if virtue is traduced, it proves to be on the whole less contemptible, and much less disastrous, than boldest vice. The incidents are the outcome of things as they are, and of men as they are; and if they are often scandalous, it is only because it is of the nature of men and

things to be productive of scandal. This implication it was good for demure citizens to see once again elucidated. It was good, too, for them to witness the pathos and mockery, the tenderness and scorn, which the outside of this life excites in a sensitive, yet cynical observer. Byron's epic of life had, indeed, manifold lessons for the pharisees of this century, and it is, perhaps, because his own nation is the most pharisaical of the modern world that a member of it wonders and puzzles without avail when foreigners go so far as to rank *Don Juan* with *Faust* among the philosophical poems of the age.\*

It is common to regard Byron and Shelley as the poets of the Revolution, while the elder writers are generally classed as reactionaries; but it would be hard to adduce any intelligible principle to justify this denial of historical sequence. That Southey, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and in his own exalted sphere Landor, were closely connected with the early revolution, is demonstrable as simple biographical fact; while in the tenor and results of their career, the influence of such an association is continually evident. That in due time the sobriety of disillusion and middle age supervened, only makes their participation in the new-born hopes the more intimate and consistent. Byron and Shelley, on the other hand, only attained to manhood when enthusiasm had given way to despair. Their moral courage was far less derived from the sight of the great transactions on the

\* See Brandes, *Die Hauptströmungen der Literatur des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, iv 529.

continent than was Wordsworth's, though their recklessness had much in common with the taste for strong excitements, which such events had induced. Their sedition, though it was their *forte*, was based not on dreams of a better order, but on impatience at the endurance of a bad one. If they must be given a cant title, they should be called after the irreconcilables of our day, rather than after the enthusiasts of the revolution. Shelley had, it is true, a childish faith in the original virtue of mankind, and believed that with the removal of the restraints of custom and law, society would spontaneously follow an elysian system of love and justice. But this hallucination sprang entirely from his temperament and youth. Shelley's distaste for history resulted from radical incapacity to comprehend human life in time and space; and his generous feelings and noble instincts were left at the mercy of an ardent imagination, in spite of earnest resolves to approach social questions through a careful study of facts. Nevertheless, his rebellion against tyrannies in theory and tyrannies in fact had some relation to actual history, for the simple reason that history is in some measure what he believed it to be altogether, "a record of crimes and miseries." He was, however, most true to his mission in appealing to charity and love, against the competitive principle of Crabbe's hard man of business and the new political economy, "let one mind one and all are minded then." His poetry, which he himself regarded as subordinate to his vocation of emancipator, was instinct with the same bold idealism and imagina-

tive freedom that characterised his whole life. It has artistic qualities which his admirers would be loth to see weighed by the measures of general history; it possesses an ethereal independence of terrestrial conditions, which defies contact with tangible standards; but it also—and herein lay its social significance for the time—embodied that animating hope which Byron's satire wholly lacked. What Byron did sardonically, Shelley did passionately; and together they sustained, not the bygone hopes of the Revolution, but the tense grievances of a new Europe.

In both poets the influence of the new naturalism was strongly operative. Neither was a partisan of its doctrinal principle; Byron indeed was its vigorous denouncer; but in their work it attained the highest elevation to which the poetry of genius could raise it. Scott, however, was so far from sharing the poetic temperament, that the Revolution kindled in him no enthusiasm. He never experienced the passion for advance which touched every spontaneous singer of that time. Regardless of actual circumstances, he was born to feel no changes congenial unless they were in a retrograde direction. But this love and reverence for the past was connected in a peculiar manner with that literalness of apprehension and unaffectedness of style which made him the most popular of writers and the most winning exponent of naturalism. Bürger received the impulse to write his *Lenore* from Percy's collection of songs; and the ballad fell into the hands of Scott, and was translated by him. This event marks Scott's determination to write

poetry, not in the style of *Lenore*, but after the inspiration which originally had stirred Bürger, in the manner of the old minstrels. Scott had been an eager collector of Border songs from his boyhood, and his enthusiasm for a ruder, heartier state of society induced him to translate Goethe's *Goetz*. Hence, when he attempted to write poetry of his own, it was romance of the days of yore. The success of his venture was unprecedented. His subjects and his style yielded to the public those aspects of naturalism which it could best appreciate. Absolute simplicity of treatment and diction, unerring description of events which Scott's imagination presented as indubitably real though they were saturated by the romantic elements of his mind, constituted, for men of all degrees of culture, reading which at that time appeared as a revelation of a new capacity for enjoyment. Higher criticism may dispute the right of Scott's verse to the title of poetry, but as long as critics themselves are unanimous only in the opinion that poetry must give pleasure, Sir Walter's metrical romances will remain poems to the world.

For the method of naturalism to achieve this, with no other aid than an imagination richly stored with visions of the feudal past, and scenes from romantic nature, was a signal triumph. Still greater was that won in the *Waverley* novels. Though these romances lacked the attractions of Scott's lively verse, they possessed what the poems wanted, and what was of far more importance. They contained a large portion of what Wordsworth had pointed to as the better part of realistic art, the

delineation and contemplation of humble life. The "colouring of imagination" which Scott threw over his poor people differed from that which Wordsworth shed over his, as the ideal of the feudal chief differs from that of the industrious yeoman. The author of the Waverley novels, as the late Mr. Bagehot pointed out in a well-known essay, succeeded in rendering the life of poverty and toil a pleasing subject of art, by approaching it as a genial, assiduous landlord would approach his tenantry. Truth, the best of truth, is preserved, but the delineation of people in narrow and sordid circumstances is never so minutely executed as to make them what in real life they must generally be, in spite of their peculiar virtues and humour, "poor talkers and poor livèrs, and in all ways poor people to read about." Scott avoided the extremes of Crabbe and the arcadian poets. "His poor people are never coarse and vulgar; their lineaments have the rude traits which a life of conflict will inevitably leave on the minds and manners of those who lead it; their notions have the narrowness which is inseparable from a contracted experience; their knowledge is not more extended than their restricted means of attaining it would render possible. Almost alone among novelists, Scott has given a thorough, minute, lifelike description of poor persons, which is at the same time genial and pleasing.\*

The attractive aspect under which Scott's patriarchal feelings presented Scotch humble life was only surpassed by the enchantment which he lent

\* *Literary Studies*, II. 161.

to his native land. His influence in bringing together England and Scotland, and in extending the growing taste for natural scenery, is matter of common recognition.\* His aid in bringing together different classes must not be overlooked. It was because his realism was informed by an artistic refinement that his services in this respect must be reckoned so considerable. Men are no more induced to approach one another by exhibiting their harshest, baldest characteristics than by merging all distinctions in an imaginary nonentity. They draw near to one another only in the belief that they are already nearer than they really are. If every one were entirely acquainted with the self of his neighbour, no man could sufficiently isolate himself. Hence, to mediate between classes, the modifications of sentiment or art are necessary. Scott displayed a large measure of both resources in his prose romances. To do the same thing for individuals is the main social purpose of the modern novel. It is accomplished by a like application of the method of naturalism. Men and women, who by instinct and cultivation have attained to more than commonly true views of human character and relations, and are able to embody the same in artistic narrative, present to their fellow men and women series of incidents and groups of persons which, while amusing,

\* "It is a well ascertained fact, that from the date of the publication of the 'Lady of the Lake,' the post-horse duty in Scotland rose in an extraordinary degree, and indeed it continued to do so for a number of years, the author's succeeding works keeping up the enthusiasm for our scenery which he had thus originally created."—Cadell : *apud* Lockhart, III. 249.

instruct the individual reader in the affinities of all phases of life, and the connections of all types of character. Mr. Herbert Spencer has bidden us to look forward to a time when social intercourse will lose its many disfiguring hindrances in a fuller harmony of human character and a surer perception of one another's emotions and purposes. If this hope be well founded,—and its promise seems as sincere as its realisation would be blissful,—then the function of the modern novel is both weighty and extensive.

The elucidation of human character and circumstances, initiated by the novelists of the eighteenth century, had been conducted too much in the interest of masculine licence, or too much in deference to feminine weakness, to be very effective as a means of general culture. Frances Burney had acquired much celebrity by portraying a variety of what Macaulay, following Ben Jonson, has called “humours,” which might be met with at that time in society of fashion; but her best novels, besides being deficient in humanising power, as all works of grotesque art must be, were almost immediately rendered antiquated by the social changes consequent on the industrial revolution. It was not till the beginning of this century that writers of her sex succeeded in placing the novel of life on that impartial basis which has enabled it to do justice to every feature of human existence. This they achieved not by merely imparting to the art a more refined tone, though by thus doing they greatly widened its sphere of usefulness without detracting from its vigour, but



by force of genuine ability. Maria Edgeworth, indeed, was able to offer to English readers a friendly interpretation of their Irish fellow-subjects, which in its success was not far inferior to Scott's corresponding office; and Susan Ferrier's satire supplied a more prosaic view of Scotch life than was compatible with the vital principle of the Waverley novels. But in purely artistic treatment of common life both these writers were far below Jane Austen. The girl who wrote *Pride and Prejudice* was not a great intellect, nor was she a great wit, but she possessed a delicate perception of character, and a talent of faithful delineation, in the exercise of which she apprised the world that individuals had still a great deal to learn about one another, and a great deal of pleasure to gain in acquiring it. Within her own circle of middle-class life, the same life that has been the source of energy and stability to the order of this century, she found the material for uneventful histories whose recital possessed all the charm of novelty and all the interest of personal sympathy. In her hands characters the most tiresome made good their claim to regard as sharers of our common human nature, and incidents the most ordinary secured attention in virtue of their relation to general domestic life. From her example men learnt how in simple dramatic narrative the realism of life might be winningly unfolded, how without the drawbacks of protracted analysis the truth of themselves might be elucidated to their common gratification and enlightenment.

## CHAPTER XV.

### CONCLUSION.

“In unserer Gegenwart bewegen sich wie im sechzehnten Jahrhundert die Völker selbst in Massen, und in allen ihren Theilen und Schichten. Und dies ist die eigenthümliche Grösse dieser Zeit. Der hervorragende Rang der grossen Begabung ist in Abnahme, aber die Zahl der mittleren Begabungen ist in desto grösserer Zunahme begriffen; nicht die Qualität, nicht die Höhe der Bildung der Einzelnen macht den Ruhm dieser Zeit aus, sondern die Quantität, die Weite, die Ausbreitung der Bildung unter den Vielen; es ist im Einzelnen nichts Grosses und Erhabenes geschehen, aber im Ganzen ist diess wahrhaft eine grosse und erhabene Wendung in der Gestalt des öffentlichen Lebens, dass die Geschichte dieser Zeit nicht blos Biographien und Fürstengeschichten zu erzählen hat, sondern Völkergeschichte.” *Gervinus.*

OF the different groups of events reviewed in the foregoing chapters, no order appears to be logically superior to the rest. The territorial dispensation, that issued from the wars and political transactions, is perhaps the most striking change; and it proved more stable than the manner of its origin and the hopes of spectators would warrant at the time. Yet territorial changes, though striking enough on the map or at the *douanes*, are in themselves external to the life of the people when they are adjusted by diplomatic truck and barter as those enforced by the Congress of Vienna were. In Napoleon's settlement of Germany they assumed greater intrinsic importance because they abridged an inevitable process of concentration; but those,

that sprang from the conditions attending the Restoration, were momentous mainly because they eventually brought about serious conflicts, and indirectly became involved with the national idea which, again, has been closely connected with the general development of men's activities as members of a state, and more particularly with the growth of taxation, national debts, and citizen armies.

The passion of nationality is one of the most influential agents in the history of the nineteenth century. Its growth had in many places been provided for by the monarchs, who had prepared the peoples for an expansion of their provincial feelings into affection for larger unities by accustoming them to regard as paramount the interests of dynasties. But its mature form as a strong spring of concerted action for ideal objects among large masses of men was in a great part of Europe an outcome of the revolutionary epoch. The central conceptions, which gave it at once power and direction, were linguistic, geographical, traditional or racial, and, in one case at least, religious. The circumstances from which it received impulse and sustenance were often the hopes of independence, the desire of self-government, and the suggestions put forth by actual change, which the revolutionary propaganda and innovations introduced. The passion, however, was very variously affected by attendant circumstances. In Russia, at least, the sense of national unity, already existing in a somewhat low form, was greatly heightened by resistance against the Revolution. Alexander's subjects felt the more Russian in

withstanding his civilising projects; and his whole empire experienced a thrill of oneness and assurance in the act of repelling invasion by the revolutionary dictator. In Spain the battle for independence knit the people more closely together; but here the spirit of innovation of itself effected an entry, and in the future, aided by the folly of the restored king, it converted the feeling of national unity into a desire for a national government. In Germany the War of Liberation did much to awaken the national sense, but its influence was surpassed by the political changes imposed by Bonaparte, by the enterprising conduct of Prussia, and the spiritual regeneration which the nation underwent of its own accord. Italy was first made to feel itself a nation by the discipline of the French emperor, notwithstanding the great differences obtaining among its people; and if Alfieri had written a little later he would have been able to supersede Metastasio's conventionalism by a truly national background, instead of by realistic vehemence in the mouths of patriots without a country. The national spirit of Greece, though it was based on ecclesiastical relations and strengthened by the sight of the Revolution, was primarily set in motion by prosperity which permitted a return to the language and history of ancient Hellas. That of the Servians, never entirely lost, rested on remembrance of autonomy in days long gone by, and was fortified by conflict with the Turks. To elucidate, in fact, the full circumstances and meaning of this historical phenomenon would require a lengthy investigation.

It is clear, however, on the face of the matter that the ostensible grounds of the sentiment would seem to positive minds to be rarely solid and frequently fanciful. Musty tradition, defective ethnology, arbitrary conceptions of geographical fitness, arguments from philological resemblances, have been brought forward in behalf of violent proceedings, till the idea of nationality has been made to appear an erratic passion which has already caused much suffering and confusion, and will probably occasion yet more. But, in truth, the formal pleas have never been the real grounds of nationalising action. They have only provided common tenets of faith around which might gather men who were moved by their supposed interests and social aspirations to realise certain political ideals. The interests have not always turned out to be substantial gains; the aspirations have frequently entailed great sacrifices and disappointments; but Englishmen should be slow to grudge other peoples the luxury of patriotic sentiments, or to overlook the fact that the routine of life may be more alleviated by sharing in the feelings and fortunes of a national state than burdened by the duties and encumbrances which such participation involves.

Though desire for national independence and unity was often accompanied by a desire for self-government, the monarchical idea still retained much power over European peoples after the conclusion of the wars. The traditions of monarchy as a reformer survived the French Revolution in spite of Burns' toast to the last verse, of the last chapter, of the last book of kings. They had been

cast into abeyance for a time when the storm was gathering fury ; but when the new movement had disclosed its terrible aspects, and the despotism of the Empire had on the one hand again made absolutism respected, and on the other hand had wearied men with sacrifices in behalf of novelties, the old confidence in monarchs partly returned to the mass of the people. The liberal professions of Alexander, the reforms under the Prussian monarchy, the constitutional promises of the sovereigns at the end of the wars, the increased power and activity of the smaller German rulers, helped to confirm this faith, though the temporary abasement of the monarchies had tended for a moment to weaken it ; while the discipline of the new military system kept the sentiment in continual exercise. However patriots and agitators might hate the dynasties, the monarchs had from the first a large fund of confidence and forbearance to draw upon in their struggle for self-preservation among the forces of a new and democratic order. Though publicists long regarded parliamentary government as a political panacea, monarchy retained its hold on European affairs till the experiment of representative assemblies had been made. Since then parliamentary institutions have betrayed shortcomings of their own ; and it is yet doubtful whether, under the conditions of modern Europe, states can dispense with a strong monarchical element in government.

The co-existence of the monarchical idea with a desire for representative institutions was indicative of a mode of viewing political reform very

different from the crude absolutism or republicanism of the eighteenth century. The longing for self-government was greatly increased and diffused by the propaganda of the Revolution, and the social conditions introduced by the new industrial system. But events at the same time demonstrated that good democratic institutions are rather the fruit of slow growth than the product of deliberate manufacture. Still it was plain that no considerable step towards self-government could be made in the greater part of Europe except by consciously elaborated innovations. The difficulty thus raised was met in great measure by the traditional faith in monarchy, and in a smaller degree by regarding the English regime with more appreciation than the authority of Montesquieu had been able to enjoin on the generation which derived its ideas from Voltaire, Rousseau, and the Economists. By incorporating the representative element of democracy into the existing monarchical system, it seemed that the best advantages of self-government might be obtained without hazarding the dangers of paper politics and ochlocratic transitions. Hence the ideal constitution, which became the object of men's hopes after 1815, was understood in the English sense of the word; and its realisation was conceived to be the establishment of a parliamentary government under a limited monarchy such as time had successfully developed in Great Britain. The solution was so evidently the logical compromise to which recent events led, that at the Restoration it received abundant recognition from the professions of the victorious sovereigns.

But the constitutional idea rested on a broader basis than the deductions of practical politicians. On its democratic side it received powerful support from the doctrines of Bentham and his disciples. On its monarchical side it was upheld by a reactionary school of publicists on the continent, and by a literary movement in Germany and France. In its revolutionary tendency it was confirmed by events in Spain, Italy, and France, till it issued in independent action in 1848. The main source of its power, however, resided in the new economical organisation of European society. The almost total abolition of feudal usages, the extensive adoption of the *Code*, the careers opened to individual merit, the exertions called forth by the continental system, had all aided the development of the middle class which was already thrusting itself into prominence under the old regime. When the wars ceased, the continent passed under the dominion of the industrial revolution. Now this event had no more been anticipated by the material progress of the eighteenth century, than the political revolution had been forestalled by the reforming statesmen and monarchs; and the rapidly increasing importance of the middle classes, as they wielded more efficiently capital and machinery, was at least as much the result of the first order of changes as of the second. If one revolution emancipated the continental bourgeois classes, the other conferred on them supremacy. These classes, placed between the crowns and landed aristocracy on the one hand, and the proletariat on the other, felt that their



strength would be best preserved if a balance were maintained between the monarchical and democratic elements in government. This feeling was the more strong because on the continent the bourgeois classes had experienced the disadvantage of having the industrial revolution imposed on them from without. In England the middle class was not only sprung from a sturdy stock, accustomed to take a part in the business and strifes of the community, but by carrying through the industrial revolution it developed to the utmost those virtues which are most necessary to the dominant members of an industrial society. In the greater part of the rest of Europe, on the contrary, the bourgeoisie had suffered a long tutelage; and when it was raised by the new industrial system to a commanding position, it gained none of the benefits to be derived from the exertions of accomplishing a great work. Hence it retained much of its old narrowness of view and timidity of heart. It felt enough confidence to wish to share government with the sovereigns, but it lacked the spirit to play a heroic rôle; and its want of moral superiority caused it to fear the rivalry of the proletariat. Thus the new masters of society were impelled both by instinctive regard for their interests, and by the manifest tendency of events, to support the constitutional idea.

And, in truth, the lords of the industrial order were confronted by serious difficulties from the outset. They, the capitalists, the organisers of labour, were the leaders of the movement; and in company with them flourished financiers and

professional men. In numbers and affluence this class far surpassed its prototype under the old regime, but the rank and file of the march excelled chiefly in numerousness. Industrial progress induced a large normal addition to the numbers of wage-earners without at first tending to raise greatly the standard of comfort. Industrial fluctuations, on the other hand, maintained a redundant population to keep up a high level of misery; and the presence of needy hands helped to encourage speculative trading. Health and morals at the same time deteriorated among the masses, crowded together in towns, and reared for the factory without regard for physical or ethical cultivation. To make these circumstances more bitter, the new political economy had exhibited the conflict of interests involved in the distribution of wealth; and the same agent had rendered the system the more sinister-looking by unveiling the causes which limited population to the means of bare subsistence. If economic science has taught labourers to regard industrial crises as the results of laws, which are not to be withstood by impatient rioting, it has also convinced them that in the modern social organisation inhere elements of chronic distress. As the economic revolution proceeded to transform European life, men of science began to reiterate that the multitude could never permanently improve its condition unless it put an arbitrary limitation to its numbers; and seasons of commercial activity kept enticing into the world beings whose very rearing the following seasons of depression made an ordeal of woe. The monitions of Malthus were

timely instructors of legislators and theorists, but without the aid of Condorcet's rationalistic corollary they failed to arrest the evils of a teeming population and enable labour to deal on fair terms with capital. Hence grew up the discontents of the proletariat. In the preceding century their masters had striven to find a short cut to freedom by inventing the rights of men: in this the wage-earners have sought to better their condition by narrowing down the principle to the rights of labour, with very plain intimations that if this artifice prove futile the original formula will be maintained in a new and more desperate sense.

But while such difficulties were inseparable from the new industrial order, they were constantly prevented from culminating into an intolerable crisis by the resources of the system itself. Increase of food supplies was continually being procured by extending agricultural improvements and the margin of cultivation over the whole world. More speedy means of transport and communication mitigated the effects of local dearth, and opened for the redundant population a way of escape to new lands. The production of manufactured necessities and comforts was indefinitely increased by the progress of invention and organisation. The process of exchange, and division of labour, continued to be more and more facilitated by mechanical appliances and commercial enterprise. A better appreciation of the nature of economic forces enabled governments to be generally less prejudicial, and sometimes even helpful, to the course of industry. The discoveries of science co-operated with the

ingenuity of inventors to further production, till the occasional services rendered by exact knowledge to labour grew into a close and vital connection. The progress of scientific discovery itself was furthered in an ever-increasing degree both by the growing numbers of earnest men who could afford to engage in research, and by the continual improvement in instruments of investigation and the means of intercourse between inquirers throughout civilised society. Among the mass of the community the most instructive of the information and lessons thus obtained was diffused by a superior class of periodical literature, initiated in England by the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly* Reviews, which awoke in the reading public an intelligent interest in the advance of knowledge and enlightenment, such as had been known only in the upper circles of France immediately before the Revolution, and of England when continental travel had been rendered impracticable by war. At the same time speculative thought discussed the eternal problems ever more boldly and circumspectly; and promoted intellectual freedom with a persistence which was foreign alike to the arrogance of the eighteenth century and the despairing dogmatism of the reaction. The literature of imagination threw its influence on the side of mental liberty, and presented to the choice of men varying, but serious, criticisms of life. Meantime primary education kept steadily raising the standard of average intelligence; the daily press and popular publications, growing continually cheaper and more efficient, gradually imparted to every class more

ample knowledge of facts, wider conceptions of social questions, and a keener interest in the welfare of the community; while increased intercourse between men steadily overcame the jealousy of ignorance and softened the asperities of conflicting interests.

In dealing with a period of such complex development, it is evident that some advance must be made on the customary method of approaching historical questions. Before our own age is reached it is convenient, if not very philosophical, to place the history of war and legislation in the foreground, and to make but occasional references to facts of other orders. While it is necessary to make periodical reviews of the course of religious, literary, and artistic culture, and of the changes in manners and customs, it is only at uncertain intervals that attention has to be directed to such facts as the invention of the compass, of gunpowder, of paper and printing; to such occurrences as a plague, a succession of bad harvests, debasement of the currency, or the ravages of war; to the effects of geographical discovery and the slow shifting of national occupations and industrial methods; to variations in the state of popular education, or to the progress of scientific knowledge; to advances in speculative opinion which are not merged in the fortunes of religious sects, and in practical theories which are not the formulæ of dominant interests. But as our own time is approached the picturesque groupings of manners, thoughts, and feelings different from our own, fade away. In their place succeeds a prosaic plexus of events which will

yield its meaning only to a rigidly logical analysis. The history of politics loses its supreme importance as the fundamental forces of social life gain freedom from extraneous bonds. Political association, with its vicissitudes, becomes but one aspect of a many-sided organisation by which men produce for themselves the necessities, comforts, and embellishments of life. When tradition drops its prescriptive right, and either disappears or establishes itself on expediency, the history of peoples embraces all other kinds of history, and is itself the outcome of men's actual efforts to live and enjoy under certain material and intellectual conditions. As this point is approached, therefore, the true basis of historical study is formed by industrial and economical events. The first condition of human existence, the first object of human association, is the production and distribution of wealth; and when men's status is left unregulated by social tradition or religious subordination, every movement in other fields of activity, in ethics, science, speculation or art, however significant they may seem in themselves, must sooner or later come into connection with the economical foundations of society if they are to effect great lasting results.

Now the period here reviewed is remarkable for an unprecedented advance in national freedom and social industry. The first part of this truth is recognised by the custom of calling the political history of the time by the name of the revolutionary epoch; but too often the corresponding fact is lost sight of. Mr. Fyffe, for example, concludes his luminous account of the main current

of political events from 1792 to 1813 with the assertion that the period was exclusively "a time of changes directly political in their nature, and directly effected by the political agencies of legislation and of war." Yet the concurrence of the two orders of changes is a relation of the highest importance. If either revolution had operated at a different time, or in a differently-adjusted connection, the final result must have departed indefinitely from that which really occurred. The main effect of the political movement was the removal of hindrances to human progress in continental Europe; that of the economical movement was the synchronous introduction of the means to achieve an enormous measure of that progress. In truth the political revolution obtains most importance when viewed as a negative movement ancillary to the industrial revolution; and future historians of our civilisation will not fail to dwell on the geographical circumstance which enabled the two processes to be consummated side by side. Eliminate the institution of citizen armies, the introduction of the Code and various agrarian reforms, the territorial dispensation of 1815, and the awakening among some peoples of a spirit of nationality and independence; and the chief remaining features of nineteenth-century society in Europe, which are not evidently survivals from the past, like the recrudescence of religious obscurantism, will be seen to be mainly built up by the industrial system which proceeded from England.

Hence in bringing the historical method to bear on present questions it is necessary to qualify and

extend the results from one order of facts by constant reference to those from others. It is, of course, desirable to start from the broadest possible groundwork, and to proceed in the search for true relations and momentous facts by following all the threads of industrial, scientific, intellectual, and artistic development which together form the web of our highly-organised civilisation. But while the existing state of historical knowledge may necessitate very imperfect estimates of minor influences, it is at least imperative neither to confine criticism to facts of a political character nor to neglect those of an economical nature. "Circumstances," said Burke, "are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or noxious to mankind." The tendency of industrial development has been to invest with social importance all those members of society concerned in the production and distribution of wealth; and the circumstances which now determine the character of political institutions are the wishes and requirements of the whole economical organisation.

At the present time it is becoming continually more evident that in self-governed communities the most important changes of the near future will be brought about by the prevailing views on the modern economical system. Society's efforts to increase its welfare will be guided by the dominant opinions concerning the process by which things have become what they are, and the possibility of introducing modifications in favour of its less fortunate members. Such opinions must be of an



historical nature ; and they will be just and beneficent in proportion to the care and assiduity with which they have been formed from the consideration of industrial and economical history. Any attempts of publicists to arrest, rather than to direct, the movement towards changes of this kind, can now only provoke impatience or occasion misconceptions. Our social organisation is constantly expanding, and involving new needs and desires. Reform, being only the conscious adaptation of society to changed conditions, inevitably becomes more frequent and fundamental as society expands and grows more autonomous and less restrained by arbitrary traditions. The political tendencies of an age like our own must, therefore, necessarily be in the direction of what is commonly called progress. To deplore such tendencies, or to regard them as destructive to the social order, is as futile and as fanciful as to dread grievous consequences to the universe from the rule of gravitation. Perhaps the attraction of matter may some day reduce the cosmos to chaos ; possibly political reform may land society in anarchy ; but it is certain that as a catastrophe would be the result of a momentary suspension of the law of gravitation, so an immeasurable disaster would attend the cessation for any length of time of political advance in a period of industrial expansion.

In his recent attempt "to test the value of the opinions which are gaining currency in our day concerning Popular Government as it verges on Democracy," Sir Henry Maine unites to a just apprehension of many of the more obvious features

of democratic rule a deep distrust of the dominant political tendency of the time. Refusing to look more deeply below the surface of events than the external vicissitudes of modern constitutions,—an order of historical information hardly more instructive than the sterile particulars of sovereigns and armies in the old-fashioned narratives,—he reverts to an earlier remark of his own, that the idea of progress is extremely modern, and confined to a relatively small portion of the human race. The idea of progress, he admits, is associated with scientific advance. “Every fresh conquest of Nature by man, giving him the command of her forces, and every new and successful interpretation of her secrets, generates a number of new ideas, which finally displace the old ones, and occupy their room.” He adds, however, that “in the Western world, the mere formation of new ideas does not often or necessarily create a taste for innovating legislation.”\* Accordingly he attributes much of the tendency to the new political economy and to Bentham’s scheme of law reform, though both are out of favour at present. But these causes are evidently insufficient to explain the disposition which makes men assure themselves that this is an Age of Progress; and so positive a thinker as Sir Henry Maine has to complete his account of the love of innovation first by reference to the keen interest in political activity which communities enjoying a measure of popular government spontaneously manifest, and then by returning to the influence of Rousseau’s and

\* *Popular Government*, p. 145.

Bentham's constitutional theories, which, he says, possessed the faculty of the hero in the Border-ballad, who fought upon his stumps when his legs were smitten off. Hence the criticism of popular government, which set out with the purpose of utilising a large body of new facts that have happened since 1815, and especially since 1830, issues in a literary victory over a wrong-headed enthusiast and a too hopeful jurist.

But the truth is that the prevailing faith in progress is neither a literary product, nor a democratic fancy, nor an analogy drawn from science. The same cause, which has produced the belief, urges to its fulfilment. The motive power now impelling societies to continually readjust their institutions by conscious innovations is the pressure of the industrial system; and the source of men's confidence in their forward movement is the knowledge that this pressure has been induced by their own exertions and their advance in intelligence and freedom. That progress in its present phase is greatly extending individual happiness, is an assumption which historical criticism will doubtless largely qualify. But it is abundantly evident that, as the industrial system has occasioned a large increase of aggregate prosperity and a considerable advance in average intelligence, has extended contractual relations till every member is personally free within the existing economical conditions, has elevated the functions of labour to an equality with the functions of fighting, governing, and learning,—so it is ever striving to assign participation in the material products

and honorary distinctions of society to every man in proportion to his contribution to the common stock of wealth, comfort, contentment, and knowledge.

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